

# HONORING THE DEACONSHIP

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P. E. BURROUGHS









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**P. E. BURROUGHS, D.D.**



**NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**  
**THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD**  
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J. E. LAMB DIN

*Secretary and Editor,  
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**CHAPTER I**

**HONORED IN ITS ORIGIN**

**OUTLINE**

- I. AN AUSPICIOUS LAUNCHING**
- II. BUFFETING STORMS**
- III. HEROIC SAILING**
- IV. A WORSE STORM THREATENED**
- V. OIL ON THE TROUBLED WATERS**
- VI. A NEW OFFICE AND NEW OFFICERS**
- VII. NEW AND RAPID PROGRESS**

## CHAPTER I

### HONORED IN ITS ORIGIN

"Watch the beginnings of things." Dr. John A. Broadus was wont to give this injunction to the men of his time. Things which count can only be understood as they are known in their beginnings and growth. This is especially true of institutions which endure through long periods. Such institutions must be studied historically. Their origin, their original setting, their development and growth, must shed light on their nature and genius.

Any proper study of the deaconship must begin with the beginnings of the office. Not otherwise can there be a sure understanding of the honor which is due to the deacon and of the service which the deacon is to render. Happily the Holy Spirit has given us a clear and concise record of the crisis which gave rise to the deaconship. The unfolding story is recorded by the careful historian in the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Beginning his narrative with the ascension of Jesus the inspired writer traces the unfolding development of the church. In the sixth chapter he records the rise of the new office which was later to be known as the office of deacon.

The story as recorded by Luke is one of charm and suggestiveness. In itself it is worthy of careful study. It offers light not otherwise available upon the office of

the deacon. It does more even than this; it offers practical suggestions of value for the conduct of the church and the solution of its internal problems. We sketch briefly the unfolding story as it is told by the Spirit-guided historian.

## I. AN AUSPICIOUS LAUNCHING

The church came in the fulness of time. Its coming was timed in heaven. The world was at peace. Not before for a century, not afterward for a long time, was there such an era of quiet and good will. In a war-torn world with its din and hatred the young church must have encountered all but insuperable difficulties. The nations rested from war. The voice of the church proclaiming peace and good will could now be heard. The church could bear witness and grow undisturbed by the fierce hatred of armed conflict.

The fires of wrath and persecution which burned fiercely about the Lord Jesus and which culminated in his trial and death seemed to die down for a time. The Jewish authorities doubtless assumed that the death of the leader would put an end to his church. Surely the followers of Jesus would be terrified and scattered and his following would be dissipated. This cessation of persecution, short-lived though it was, gave the new church the opportunity which it needed to find itself and get started on its way. Moreover this brief respite from attack enabled the apostles and the increasing company of disciples to gather courage and strength for the storms which were soon to break in increased fury.

Vast multitudes from all parts of the world had attended the Passover. Their attention had been centered



upon the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. They had come to know his claims and his miracles. They had without doubt scattered the tidings of these momentous events throughout the world. These tidings must have found response and awakened hope in devout worshipers everywhere. After the Passover which witnessed the crucifixion of the Lord, the next great event was Pentecost, about fifty days later.

There was thus time for the news of the Passover events to be spread abroad and for eager, expectant throngs to gather in Jerusalem at Pentecost. It is clear that such throngs were there and that they came from all parts of the known world. Indeed, Luke tells us plainly that such throngs were gathered: "Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." A map showing the countries from which the people came would comprise practically a map of the then-known world.

The Spirit came, Peter preached, the disciples witnessed, and three thousand were added to the church on that memorable Pentecost. The apostles must have been quick to see the possibilities offered in the conversion of these thousands assembled from many nations. Here were potential missionaries ready to go to the leading countries of the world. The new converts must be taught and trained with a view to this service. This needed teaching could only be imparted by the apostles in Jerusalem. Therefore some arrangement must be made to maintain the converts there in order that they might be confirmed in fellowship and instructed in the gospel. Naturally people making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for a brief sojourn would bring only limited supplies and would not be prepared to prolong their stay.



Here was a real crisis. The Jerusalem saints, led doubtless by the apostles, rose to meet this crisis with a spirit of hospitality and sacrifice which has been the admiration of the ages. They determined at all hazards to make it possible for these potential missionaries to remain in Jerusalem and receive the needed training. Here on a grand scale and in the midst of heroic conditions was conducted a training school which was destined to affect the course of human history and the destinies of the race. Surely we are justified in saying that the new movement was auspiciously launched.

## II. BUFFETING STORMS

Alas that this scene of gladness and promise should be so ruthlessly disturbed. The respite from persecution was all too brief. The skies temporarily clear were soon overcast with clouds. The jealous Jewish leaders could not long see the new order grow without further and more resolute attempts to stamp it out. Having tasted blood in the destruction of the leader it was not long before they thirsted for the blood of his followers. The storm fell quick and furious. The chief apostles, Peter and John, were arrested and put in prison.

This outbreak against the leaders was doubtless the signal for a general persecution against the disciples. Jews of the bigoted type which infested Jerusalem would not hesitate to go any lengths in their efforts to harass and destroy the new church. In addition to the more violent means used they would naturally resort to a boycott of the believers, depriving them of employment and otherwise distressing them in their business affairs. The contest waxed sore. In poverty and distress, the

disciples who lived in Jerusalem determined to meet the need. The Jewish leaders, powerful and vindictive, pressed the battle, firmly resolved to uproot and utterly destroy the struggling church. The battle was on and it was to be a battle to the finish.

### III. HEROIC SAILING

The disciples were as courageous as their persecutors were ruthless. Inspired by the apostles they endured the fiery trial with uncomplaining fortitude. Bound together by holy bonds of fellowship they determined to sustain one another and outride the fierce storm. The Jerusalem saints bravely bore the brunt of the burden. With most of them life at best was a struggle. Their business was hampered, their property was put in jeopardy and yet they felt the call to extend hospitality to the new converts. The crisis was faced with sacrificial courage. In simple and stately language the historian tells the story.

Nor was there any one of them in want, for all who owned houses or lands would sell them and bring the price of the things that were sold, and lay it at the apostles' feet; and distribution would be made to each according to his need (Acts 4: 34-35 Montgomery).

It is a wonderful story. Men must be dull indeed who fail to see here a rarely beautiful picture. In all the history of Christ's earthly kingdom we have no finer incident than this. The believers pooled their resources for the common weal. The richest became as poor as the poorest. The poorest became as rich as the richest. Each would contribute his resources to the common fund.

All would thus live together. If the worst should come to the worst they would face starvation together.

Led by the unfearing apostles, the disciples determined by heroic sailing to weather the buffeting storm.

#### IV. A WORSE STORM THREATENED

Fierce and trying as was the storm which thus buffeted the church, an even more serious storm threatened. Persecution and assault coming from without could do little damage. Human hatred, satanic fury beating on the church from without only nerved the saints to greater heroism and firmer resistance. Christ's cause has never seriously suffered through the storms from without. The ocean waves which buffet the struggling ship can do little harm. It is when the ocean waters get inside that damage begins. Satan outside of the church is impotent; it is when Satan gets inside that real difficulty arises.

Now an inside storm threatens. There is a disturbed fellowship. Without doubt the churches have suffered from disturbed fellowship as they have scarcely suffered from any other cause. There is a murmuring, a discontent, a root of bitterness in the church itself.

About this time, as the number of the disciples was increasing, complaints were made by the Greek-speaking Jews against the Hebrews because their widows were habitually overlooked in the daily ministrations.

The Hebrews, or homeborn Jews, were in the majority; they doubtless made the largest contribution to the general fund. The Grecians were a less important minority. They started a complaint; their widows were overlooked and slighted in the daily ministrations. Here was a most delicate situation, fraught with the direst possibilities.

Minorities, especially when they are inferior in general standing, are likely to be sensitive. The question concerned their widows. It was felt that their widows were slighted. The complaint really involved the apostles, since they had in hand this business of distribution. The cloud was scarcely larger than a man's hand, but serious issues were at stake. The apostles detected the possibility of a storm most serious in its consequences.

#### V. OIL ON THE TROUBLED WATERS

The apostles saw and met the emergency quickly.

So the twelve called together the general body of the disciples and said, "It does not seem fitting that we Apostles should neglect the word of God and attend to the tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, and we will appoint them to undertake this duty. But, as for us, we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2-4,\* Weymouth).

So condensed is the record that essential elements may be easily overlooked. Let us see just what occurred.

First, the apostles took the initiative in settling the threatened dispute. Church officers and all church leaders have here a special responsibility. Possibly the apostles, as they pondered this situation, recalled the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Second, the apostles called the multitude of the disciples unto them. This was most wholesome. Was it not better than asking for a conference of leaders? What

\*Weymouth's translation of *The New Testament*, published by The Pilgrim Press, Boston, Mass. Used by permission.

was needed at this time was that the whole company of the disciples should come together. Let the minority assemble with the majority. A coming together is always desirable when there is a tendency to go apart.

Third, the apostles proceeded to heal the breach without even mentioning it. They declared that a new type of service was needed, a division of labor. They set forth plans for a new church ministry. They guided the church, but even in its disordered state they trusted the church to manage its own affairs and to elect the men needed. They offered no suggestion as to who should be chosen; they made no nomination. The church was itself asked to elect the new officers.

This course and proposal of the apostles pleased the whole multitude. Everybody was happy. There was oil on the troubled waters. The threatened storm was diverted. The majority was pleased; the minority was satisfied; ill feeling was allayed.

Fourth, the majority added a touch to the conciliatory procedure of the apostles. It is a considerate touch which must not be overlooked. The names of the seven men chosen are all Grecian. It is manifest that the men selected were preponderantly Grecian. The Hebrews being in the majority could easily have chosen men from their own party. They did not do it. Instead they seem deliberately to have favored the minority so that the church selected at least a goodly number from among the Grecians.

## VI. A NEW OFFICE AND NEW OFFICERS

Thus in a perfectly natural way the church came to have a new office and new officers. These officers stood



with the apostles as associate servants of the church. Thus we have the beginnings of the deaconship. As yet the new officers were not given a technical designation; they were merely "the seven." As the apostles were forerunners of the pastors who later served the churches in a distinctly spiritual capacity, so these men were beyond doubt the forerunners of the deacons who later came to serve the churches in material affairs.

As the conditions which gave rise to the apostleship were temporary and passed with the apostles, so the situation out of which came the deaconship was temporary and passed with "the seven." The community of goods arose in a special and temporary crisis and it passed with that crisis. Thus the scaffolding which was about the deaconship was torn away. This was the wisdom of the Spirit. The duties of the office were to be general rather than limited and definite. The office was to remain for all time. It was well that the immediate occasion with the first definite assignment of duties should pass. The essential elements of service which will be forever needed by the churches remained and will always remain.

## VII. NEW AND RAPID PROGRESS

Following the storm which had threatened, there came a deepened revival with larger conquests.

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Our story would not be complete without the record of this glorious climax. A new infilling of the Spirit,

renewed witnessing, the winning of many new adherents to the faith followed that first selection of deacons. Surely the deaconship is honored in its origin.

In the following chapters we shall have frequent occasion to revert to this story of the beginnings of the office. Out of the conditions and developments which we have outlined we derive much suggestive guidance by which we may determine the nature and the duties of the deaconship.





## **CHAPTER II**

# **HONORED IN ITS NATURE**

## **OUTLINE**

- I. THE DEACONSHIP IS HONORED IN ITS NATURE**
  1. The Word Used to Designate the Office
  2. The Relation of the Deacon to the Pastor
  3. The Relation of the Deacon to the Church
- II. THE DEACONSHIP IS DISHONORED BY DEPARTURE FROM ITS NATURE AND PLACE AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**
  1. The Deaconship Is Dishonored When It Is Regarded as a Post of Honor Rather than as a Medium of Service
  2. The Deaconship Is Dishonored When It Becomes a Medium of Rule Rather than of Ministry
    - (1) Such democracy is not easy to maintain
    - (2) Baptist people are naturally influenced by other denominations
    - (3) The drift among Baptists may be clearly traced
  3. The Deaconship Is Not Honored When the Care and Direction of Church Finance Is Entrusted to Other Hands
    - (1) Deacons who are manifestly unequal to the demands might voluntarily relinquish the office
    - (2) Churches may by an established rotation in office seek to maintain an active and efficient diaconate
    - (3) Best of all, there might be real and persistent effort to lead the deacons to seek the training and equipment needed for their special ministry
    - (4) Men not now deacons who would be especially valuable in the leadership of church finances
    - (5) Conditions which might justify the formation of a separately functioning finance committee
  4. The Deaconship Is Not Honored When Its Duties Are Divided and Partly Allotted to So-called "Trustees"

## CHAPTER II

### HONORED IN ITS NATURE

The honor of the deaconship lies in the nature of the office. It is distinctly a call to serve. The honor involved is the honor of service. The duties of the office cannot be defined and definitely limited. The genius of the church and the nature of the office forbid exact definition and precise limitation. Our first concern is to determine from the New Testament writings the essential nature of the office. In the light of its nature it will be easy to make deductions as to special duties. We undertake to make such deductions in a later chapter. In this chapter we seek to show that the deaconship is honored in its nature and we point out some ways in which the deaconship may be dishonored by departure from its nature as set forth in the New Testament.

#### I. THE DEACONSHIP IS HONORED IN ITS NATURE

What, according to the New Testament, is the nature of the deaconship? The nature of the office may be seen, first, in the word which is used to designate it; second, in the relation of the deacon to the pastor; and third, in the relation of the deacon to the church.

##### 1. *The Word Used to Designate the Office*

The word "deacon," Greek *διάκονός*, signifies a servant or minister. It was generally used in the New Testament merely to indicate a servant and only gradually did

it come to be used in a somewhat technical sense as designating a special officer in the church. As indicating the earlier untechnical use of the word, we point out some instances of its use to suggest a servant or minister in a general sense.

The civil ruler was a *deacon*. Paul says (Rom. 13: 4), "For he [the civil magistrate] is Θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός, the *deacon of God*, to thee for good." Our translators have rendered it "For he is the minister of God to thee."

The apostles were *deacons*. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but διάκονοι, deacons by whom ye believed" (1 Cor. 3:5). Our version says "*ministers* by whom ye believed."

Our Lord Jesus was called a *deacon*. Paul so described him: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was διάκονός, a deacon, of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises." Here again our version says "a *minister* of the circumcision."

"Thus," concludes Dr. Howell,\* "according to the *usus loquendi* of the Scriptures, all ministers or servants, ordinary and extraordinary, political, ecclesiastic, angelic and divine, are familiarly called deacons."

The fact that this general title came to be specifically applied to the office in question is highly significant. Deacons are servants or ministers of the churches. The deaconship involves the idea of service. Men are to be elected to the office of deacon with a view to service.

## 2. *The Relation of the Deacon to the Pastor*

In our study of the origin of the office of the deacon we saw that the new office was created as a measure of relief and assistance for the pastors. When the church

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\**The Deaconship*, by R. B. C. Howell.

was small and its burdens of administration were light the apostles had little difficulty in rendering the required service. As the church increased in its membership and the responsibilities of its administration multiplied they found themselves pressed with many cares. Under the Spirit's guidance they asked for a division of labor and proposed new officers who might share with them the cares and burdens which they found too heavy. It is therefore of the essential nature of the deacon's office that it shall shield the pastor and protect him so that he may fulfil his distinct and peculiar function in prayer and the ministry of the word. Here no fixed rules can be stated. None are needed.

Discerning deacons will always find their highest usefulness in such an intelligent and understanding support of the pastor as will set him free for his sacred ministry. Happy is the pastor who is surrounded by a company of deacons who hold up his hands and stand about him as a sort of bodyguard, shielding and protecting him in his varied ministry.

### *3. The Relation of the Deacon to the Church*

In the division of labor and the assignment of a place to the deacon, a fairly clear line was drawn as to the relation of the deacon to the church. On one side of the line stands the pastor. He is, shall we say, the ranking officer especially entrusted with the ministry which is more distinctly spiritual. On the other side is the deacon, standing next to the pastor, and entrusted with the care of the material interests of the church. He is to care for the properties of the church, its building, its pastor's home, and its other material holdings. He is to direct and safeguard the financial side of its ministry.

As contrasted with the pastor he is to serve in what may be properly called the materialities of the church.

Confessedly the light shed by the word which designates the deacon, and the light which comes from his relation to the pastor and to the church is no clear or final guide as to the exact duties which shall be expected of the deacon. This light is nonetheless valuable as a safe and suggestive guide. Thus the nature of the office is clearly indicated. We honor the deaconship when we hold its ministry to the lines thus suggested.

## II. THE DEACONSHIP IS DISHONORED BY DEPARTURE FROM ITS NATURE AND PLACE AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### *1. The Deaconship Is Dishonored When It Is Regarded as a Post of Honor Rather than as a Medium of Service*

To be a deacon in the church is an honor of high order. Paul suggests (1 Tim. 3: 1) that men may properly desire the office of bishop. By similar reasoning men may desire the office of deacon. Since men wish to serve, they may properly covet the office which offers exceptional opportunity for service. Service carries with it honor. In the deaconship as in all other ministry in the church there is honor. But in the church as elsewhere service goes before honor and real honor comes only of service. The deaconship is degraded when it is sought for the sake of honor rather than service.

### *2. The Deaconship Is Dishonored When It Becomes a Medium of Rule Rather than of Ministry*

Any office carrying responsibility implies some measure of authority. Paul plainly suggests (1 Tim. 3: 5) that the pastor must exercise some kind of rule in the church.

Deacons, by virtue of their office, must share with the pastor this responsibility of leadership which really amounts to authority and rule. At the same time it should go without saying that deacons are not to be ruling elders or managing directors. The church is to be a pure democracy.

(1) *Such democracy is not easy to maintain.*—It is not that church officers seek or desire to lord it over the churches. It is rather that the churches tend constantly to shift to the shoulders of the officers responsibility which they ought themselves to bear.

This tendency is not confined to churches; it is equally manifest in civic and commercial life. The masses shrink from responsibility—and are content to submit to the rule of the few.

In the early history of our country the towns and even the cities were zealous for their democracy and the equal rights of their citizens. At first there were aldermen, one man being elected from each ward to voice the sentiments of his ward. Then came a commission form of government, the mayor together with the several commissioners constituting the governing body. Then came the city manager idea and for the sake of so-called efficiency one man became practically the ruler and manager for an entire city. In the interest of what is supposed to be efficiency this tendency to centralize authority has been marked in all institutional life.

The same tendency is in evidence in commercial affairs. Stockholders are usually quite willing to accord to directors absolute authority; all too often they are content if only ample dividends are declared.



This prevailing disposition to leave the rule to the few naturally affects churches along with all other institutions.

(2) *Baptist people are naturally influenced by other denominations.*—It has long been a proud boast among Baptists that they maintain the simple democracy of the New Testament churches. That Baptists have influenced other people vastly in this matter there can be no doubt. On the other hand, evidences are abundant that the denominations which maintain a central ruling authority have directly influenced the Baptist people. In theory Baptists still stand for the equal rights of believers and for democracy in the churches. If these time-honored New Testament doctrines are to be perpetuated in actual practice a ceaseless vigilance must be maintained on the part of the churches.

(3) *The drift among Baptists may be clearly traced.*—It is seen in the adoption and use of the word "board" as applied to the deacons in a church so that this company becomes a *board of deacons*. Through the ages in Baptist usage the deacons had been a small company of laymen in the churches who were entrusted with certain material cares. Some fifty or more years ago this group began to be called *the board of deacons*. Dr. E. C. Dargan recalled the time when this phrase began to come into general use. He declared that Dr. John A. Broadus, seeing with his usual clear vision what was involved and sensing the perils ahead, inveighed against the newly-coined phrase, and pleaded for simple New Testament democracy in the churches. The protests and warnings of Dr. Broadus and others with him were of little avail. The phrase has come into general use at last

and the company of deacons in any church is now usually designated *the board of deacons*.

The adoption and use of the phrase is not necessarily objectionable. Dr. Broadus and others of the great Baptist fathers challenged and opposed the use of the phrase because they felt that they saw in it a tendency to centralization which might imperil the democracy of the churches. That the concern which those men felt was not altogether without foundation is evident in the fact that now in some instances the deacons direct and guide the affairs of the church quite as fully as any board of directors controls the bank or the school.

### *3. The Deaconship Is Not Honored When the Care and Direction of Church Finance Is Entrusted to Other Hands*

This is the specific sphere in which deacons are called to serve. For this end the office came into being. The tendency, sometimes manifest, to go away from the deacons and set up some other agency for this service probably grows largely out of the fact that the body of deacons does not always comprise the men who can actively and most successfully serve in the gathering and handling of money and in the directing of the financial policies of the churches.

We have here, to be sure, a difficult question. If churches find themselves burdened with deacons who are not efficient in the task to which deacons are in some peculiar sense called, what are the churches to do? If a given church has been accustomed to elect as acting deacons all men who come with letters declaring that they have been ordained to the deaconship, if the church has elected men as deacons without due care and without special regard for their specific tasks, it is



practically certain that the body of deacons will come to comprise many incompetent men. The number of these men who lack efficiency may be such that the body of deacons is itself unequal to the task of directing the financial policies. At the same time there may be in the church other laymen who possess every needed qualification for financial leadership. What is to be done under such conditions? We offer some simple and more or less obvious suggestions.

(1) Deacons who are manifestly unequal to the demands might voluntarily relinquish the office. Good men who, through no fault of their own, find themselves filling an office for which they are not qualified merit sympathy rather than condemnation. Men who served efficiently and were useful during a given administration and who find themselves hopeless misfits in a changed era and a new administration should receive most patient consideration. Since generally no normal provision is made by the churches for the retirement of deacons it is perhaps inevitable that in due time many men will find themselves in the difficult position of holding the office of deacon without possessing the requisite qualifications. A simple and manifestly proper way out of such difficulty would be for such brethren to retire voluntarily from the deaconship. They might thus show themselves worthy of high honor and win sincere approval.

(2) Churches may by an established rotation in office seek to maintain an active and efficient diaconate. This method has been tried with varying measures of success. While it offers certain advantages, it is likewise fraught with certain perils.

(3) Best of all, there might be, as we are suggesting in these pages, real and persistent effort to lead the

deacons to seek the training and equipment needed for their special ministry. New and efficient deacons may be secured by making over the old deacons. Surely here is the path of wisdom for the churches.

(4) Men who are not now deacons and who would be especially valuable in the leadership of church finances, men who are needed for such leadership, may be elected to the office of deacon. Even if such men are not chosen to fill the office, they may be asked to serve as members of the finance committee, which will usually be composed largely of deacons and will generally be closely related to the deacons.

(5) There may be conditions which would seem to justify the formation of a separately-functioning finance committee. Many careful churches led by thoughtful pastors have felt that this course under certain conditions is advisable.

Whatever practical expedients may seem desirable and necessary under varying conditions, it must be apparent that the deaconship is not honored when it is deprived of one of its chief functions in church life.

#### *4. The Deaconship Is Not Honored When Its Duties Are Divided and Partly Allotted to So-called "Trustees"*

In the states generally, churches are required by law to appoint trustees to represent them in the holding of real estate. Thus in receiving, or holding, or disposing of real estate these trustees are required to represent the church. This is purely a civic requirement, a kind of legal formality. Such trustees are designed merely to represent the church and satisfy legal requirements. The state never intended, and surely the Holy Spirit never meant that a new office should be thus created in

the church. Such trustees are required by the state; they should serve the ends sought by the state, and their ministry should end there.

Thus trustees are not in any proper sense officers in the churches. Their proper function is to represent the church in the holding of real estate property according to the requirements of the state. They can do nothing without authority and instruction from the churches. In accordance with the precedent set in the early Jerusalem church and in harmony with a tradition which has persisted through the centuries of Christian history, the deacons have been entrusted with the care of church property. The deaconship is not honored when this part of its peculiar ministry is given over to others.

Question may very properly be raised as to whether and how far the precedents set by the New Testament churches and the customs which prevailed in the first century should be followed by the churches of the present day with their large numbers and multiplied ministries. In this connection it may be said that the Jerusalem church numbered about five thousand in its membership and that many of the early churches were probably quite as large. The ministry of those churches was likewise vigorous and varied. We can at least safely say that the precedents and customs which arose in the early churches under the guidance of the inspired apostles, carry very real weight and should be followed as general guiding principles by the churches of the present day.



### **CHAPTER III**

## **HONORED IN ITS EXACTING DEMANDS**

### **OUTLINE**

#### **I. SPIRITUAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. Full of the Holy Spirit
2. Full of Wisdom
3. Full of Faith

#### **II. MORAL QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Deacons Are to Be Grave
2. Deacons Are to Be Right in Regard to Speech
3. Deacons Are to Be Right in Regard to Strong Drink
4. Deacons Are to Be Right on the Money Question

#### **III. DEACONS SHOULD BE SOUND IN DOCTRINE**

#### **IV. DEACONS MUST BE RIGHT IN THEIR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

1. He Is to Be the Husband of One Wife
2. The Deacon Is to Rule Well His Own Children and His Own Home

## CHAPTER III

### HONORED IN ITS EXACTING DEMANDS

The Holy Spirit has honored the deaconship by imposing high standards for those who are to fill the office. These standards embody the highest ideals of Christian character. They are so high and so exacting that men must pause in reverence as they contemplate them. The nature of the church and the genius of the deaconship render such exacting standards inevitable. The officers in any institution are expected to be its typical representatives. They must be supposed to exemplify its highest ideals.

Combining the New Testament references to the deaconship we have full directions as to the character of the men who are to fill the office. Deacons were to be businessmen. Business service was to be required at their hands. They must possess business qualifications. These things were assumed. They were passed without mention. A first and chief concern was felt as to their spiritual and moral qualifications.

#### I. SPIRITUAL REQUIREMENTS

While the church has certain material business interests, it is in its nature and mission essentially a spiritual institution. It is but natural that the spiritual qualifications of its officers should receive much emphasis.

### 1. *Full of the Holy Spirit*

So long and so freely have we used this phrase, "full of the Holy Spirit," it may have lost for us something of the definiteness and the significance which marked it as it first fell from the lips of the apostles. In New Testament times this was no worn or hackneyed phrase. It was fresh and warm with a distinct meaning.

If to some among us the Holy Spirit is merely an impersonal influence, to the early disciples the Spirit was a real and blessed person. In accordance with the promise of Jesus he had come at Pentecost to infill and possess believers. His presence with believers was a definite and glorious reality. When, therefore, the apostles demanded that "the seven" should be full of the Holy Spirit there was no vagueness, no uncertainty. The phrase went crashing through the minds of the hearers with a sure and clear meaning. The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, the personal representative of the Lord Jesus, was to fill and possess the men who were to serve the church. They were to be "men full of the Holy Spirit."

It is not merely that they should be spiritually minded. It means that, of course, but it means much more. Devout men in the old dispensation were spiritually minded. These New Testament believers were to be more than devout and spiritual men. They were to be full of the Holy Spirit. The living person who came in such wonderful manifestation at Pentecost was, shall we say, literally to fill them. Much more should their outstanding leaders be men full of the Holy Spirit. The meaning of the demand thus made by the apostles is quite clear when we ponder the heroism and the exploits which



marked certain of the seven in the eventful days which followed.

Deacons should be men full of the Holy Spirit. How, then, can the churches choose and set apart to the deaconship men whose lives show that they do not even know that there is such a person as the Holy Spirit? Paul came upon a group of disciples at Ephesus concerning whose knowledge of the Spirit he had reason to doubt (Acts 19: 1 ff.). Paul boldly asked, as ministers in our day well might ask, whether these men received the Holy Spirit when they believed. The men answered, as doubtless many in our day might answer, that they had not so much as heard that the Holy Spirit was given. Paul instructed the men more thoroughly and proceeded to baptize them on a declaration of repentance and faith. Men who are ignorant of the grace and power of the indwelling Spirit may well be instructed and guided. In no case should they be chosen as office bearers in the church.

There are men in many ways exemplary in their lives and walk who could not be considered full of the Spirit by any stretch of imagination. Such men may not have the spiritual discernment to know their lack. They may not even know that there is a Holy Spirit. Surely the churches will not grieve the Spirit by electing such men to the deaconship.

## *2. Full of Wisdom*

This does not mean that the deacon must be a learned man. Learned men are not necessarily wise men. The life and ministry of any man should be richer and fuller through real learning, but the wisdom here required is of a high spiritual order. Such wisdom comes of a loving



nature and an understanding heart. James well describes it (3: 17): "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Men do not inherit such wisdom by nature nor do they attain it by human effort. James tells us (1: 5) how it is to come: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

### 3. *Full of Faith*

The man first named among "the seven" is declared to have been "a man full of faith." We have here a new and distinct qualification for the deaconship. As the term is used here, it indicates a quality of courage and aggressiveness. We have only to read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and note the achievements set down to the credit of faith to catch and feel the note of vigor and the militancy which is involved. To be full of faith is to be full of courage and energy. Faith achieves and triumphs. Faith dares and leads. Deacons as trusted officers in the church should be more than good men; they should be more than wise men. They should be marked by the courage and aggressiveness which are the fruits of faith.

## II. MORAL QUALIFICATIONS

As outlined by Paul these are four in number:

### 1. *Deacons Are to Be Grave*

The word as Paul uses it signifies gravity or weight. The deacon should be a man who counts.

The word offers no rebuke to cheerfulness. The godly deacon who often lamented the jovial strain of good humor which brightened his own life and blessed the world about him, as incapacitating him for the office of deacon, quite misunderstood Paul's meaning. A cheerful man with a merry heart may be in the best sense grave, weighty. The man who is grave is the man who weighs, the man whose support of any cause will be a distinct asset. When Robert E. Lee cast his lot with the Southern Confederacy he counted more for that cause than whole regiments of soldiers might have counted. When Abraham Lincoln in the hour of its peril linked his life with the cause of the Union he added weight which cannot be told in words. When Woodrow Wilson stood out during the World War as the incarnation of the ideals of democracy and as its spokesman, he added to the Allies an incalculable weight. When Saul of Tarsus embraced the Christian faith and espoused the cause of Christ, he was worth more to that cause than our minds can well conceive. These were extraordinary men in extraordinary times, but they illustrate for all men in all times what Paul meant when he demanded that deacons should be grave.

## *2. Deacons Are to Be Right in Regard to Speech*

As to character, they must be grave or weighty. As to speech, they must be straight speakers, not speaking double. The man who in his character is grave or weighty will not in his speech be lightly swayed so as to talk one way in one company and another way in a different company. The man who is double-tongued, talking one way in one presence and another way in a different presence, is untruthful; even more, such a man lacks courage and sincerity. No man who is essentially untruthful and who

is lacking in courage and sincerity can worthily represent the church, which teaches and demands truthfulness, courage, and sincerity as primary virtues.

### 3. *Deacons Are to Be Right in Regard to Strong Drink*

Paul says that the deacon is *not to be given to much wine*. Wine was in that country, famed for its vineyards, a table beverage used very much as coffee and tea are now used. The standards of that day demanded temperance, and Paul sets it down so: "not given to much wine." In the changed conditions of our day, and in view of the poison and peril of intoxicating liquors, we may interpret Paul's injunction as demanding total abstinence from all intoxicants. The Christian standard demands more; it demands the total destruction of the legalized liquor traffic. No church can hesitate or occupy middle ground on this question.

The world knows where the churches ought to stand in regard to the drink evil. The man of the street has scant regard for any minister or any church which hesitates or equivocates. What is true of the preacher and the church is, of course, equally true of the deacon. The deacon must ring true on the liquor question. He should be personally a total abstainer. He should support the churches and the forces of righteousness in no uncertain way as they press the battle against the liquor traffic. He should support his government in its efforts to suppress that traffic.

### 4. *Deacons Are to Be Right on the Money Question*

Paul states it comprehensively: "not greedy of filthy lucre." Essentially the same demand is made of the preacher; for him, Paul's word is, "not covetous." The money peril is the most grievous of all perils. It is as

true in our day as it was in New Testament times: "The love of money is the root of all evil." Every evil under heaven, every sin of which the human heart can be guilty, may grow from this root, the love of money. The love of money, greed for gain, will dry up the best fountains of the heart; it will blast and mildew the soul; it will destroy the finest and holiest impulses of life.

Covetousness, an undue love of money, is denounced in the Holy Scriptures as among the most grievous of sins. It is peculiarly abhorrent in the follower of Jesus since it exalts time as against eternity and essentially belies the Christian faith. Thus covetousness is said to be idolatry. To the extent that men love money they make a god of money and worship at its shrine.

There are peculiar reasons why deacons should not be money-lovers. They are entrusted with the management of church money. They are to inspire and challenge believers in their giving of money. If they themselves love money they are by so much disqualified for the high service which their office demands.

### III. DEACONS SHOULD BE SOUND IN DOCTRINE

Paul says it in simple fashion: "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Deacons ought to know and understand the doctrines of Christ's gospel. The tendency manifest in some quarters to make light of doctrines and to get away from doctrinal emphasis offers subtle and dangerous perils. Our word "doctrines" is only another word for "teachings." The doctrines of Christianity are the teachings of Christianity. Deacons ought to know the mystery of the faith; they ought to be grounded in the teachings of the Holy

Scriptures. It is not necessary, and it is hardly to be expected, that they shall be, like the pastor, versed in theology and deeply learned in Bible lore. To be sure, the more deeply deacons can go into these profound studies the better for them and for the churches.

Just as there are fuller and more scientific doctrinal treatises for ministers and others who need them, so there are briefer and less technical books for busy laymen which set forth in satisfactory fashion the essential doctrines of Christianity. Among these we may mention:

*\*The Doctrines of Our Faith*, by E. C. Dargan

*What Baptists Believe*, by O. C. S. Wallace

*Christian Doctrine*, by W. T. Conner

*Our Doctrines*, by H. W. Tribble

Deacons as high officers in the church should, of course, understand the distinctive teachings of their own denomination, those special doctrines which set their own people apart from other people. Speaking for the Baptists, there are certain teachings which they declare and which are not declared by other people. The proclamation of these truths and their preservation among men justify the separate existence of Baptists. Surely deacons in the churches ought to know and appreciate these distinctive teachings.

#### IV. DEACONS MUST BE RIGHT IN THEIR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The deacon must be right in the relationships of the home and family. So vital and far-reaching is the influence of the deacon that the inspired apostle counts it necessary to say a very definite word as to his family connections.

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\*Out of print.

### *1. He Is to Be the Husband of One Wife*

There is natural difficulty in our day with our laws and institutions in understanding this injunction. In our day it could be safely taken for granted that no man would be considered for the office of deacon who is a polygamist. Our present situation and the honor in which the marriage relation is held are direct fruits of the gospel. Plurality of wives was common in Paul's day. Converts from heathenism in fairness to all the interests involved could not be expected summarily to give up this heathen practice. Readjustments were made then, as they have been made in many mission fields since, gradually and in ways to care for justice and propriety. Men with a plurality of wives were often received in the churches. The practice was, of course, abhorrent to the teachings of Jesus, and was in all cases to be discouraged and discontinued. Paul stipulates that the deacon, if he is a married man, shall be the husband of but one wife.

The underlying principle is that the deacon must be right in his social and family relations. The reason must be apparent. Social and family evils affect and undo character. More, they depreciate standing and destroy influence.

The requirement does not bar unmarried men from the deaconship any more than the similar qualification for ministers would close the door to the ministry in the face of unmarried men.

### *2. The Deacon Is to Rule Well His Own Children and His Own Home*

The man who as the head of a family conducts an exemplary household, maintains proper control over his children and in general orders his own house well, is by



so much to be trusted to serve wisely and helpfully in the church family.

### THE QUESTION OF DEACONESSSES

If the reader has followed the unfolding list of requirements for deacons as they are recorded in 1 Timothy 3: 8-12, he has observed that in verse 11 there are suggestions for women. The reference is more or less obscure and offers serious difficulties in its interpretation.

(1) The King James Version reads: "Even so must *their wives* be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." Thus Paul would offer supplemental requirements for the wives of deacons. There is much to support this view.

(2) The American Standard Version translates the passage thus: "Women in like manner *must be* grave," etc. Thus the reference would be to women in general. The requirements for deacons are thus assumed to be such as apply to men in general, and the inspired writer drops the additional suggestion for women. A vast majority of Bible scholars have espoused either this view or the view stated above.

(3) Yet others would translate the passage thus: "Even so *deaconesses* must be grave," etc. These infer that the New Testament suggests a distinct church office to be filled by women who are to be known as deaconesses. These further support their contention by the suggestion that Phoebe, in Romans 16: 1, is designated a "deaconess." The translation in the King James Version is "servant."

If it is suggested that *deaconesses* should be ordained as officers of the church and should constitute a part of



the diaconate or official body of the church, we must enter protest. Such procedure would seem to contravene both the precedents and the teachings of the New Testament.

Women long have rendered and now render in all churches varied and valuable service. As teachers of the Bible, as winners of souls, as leaders in mission study, as visitors of the sick and the needy, women render service. Whether it is wise and proper to set apart some of these women and distinguish them as "deaconesses," or whether all alike should be regarded as unofficial servants or deaconesses, the churches must themselves decide, interpreting as best they may such guidance as is offered in the New Testament. Whether or not they so designate them, every church has "deaconesses" in goodly numbers.

#### **CHAPTER IV**

### **HONORED IN ELECTION AND ORDINATION**

#### **OUTLINE**

- I. WHAT NUMBER OF DEACONS?**
- II. WHAT PREPARATION FOR THEIR ELECTION?**
- III. HOW SHALL THE DEACONS BE ELECTED?**
- IV. WHAT SHOULD BE THE DEACON'S TENURE OF OFFICE?**
  1. They May Take Their Letters and Seek Membership Elsewhere
  2. The Deacon's Tenure of Office May Be Ended at His Own Request
  3. The Deacon's Active Service May Cease on Account of Advancing Years and the Burdens of Age
  4. The Church for Sufficient Reasons May Ask a Deacon to Yield Up His Office
  5. Deacons May Be Retired from Active Service by a Standing Order of the Church
- V. WHAT OF THE METHOD OF SETTING MEN APART FOR THE WORK OF THE DEACON?**

## CHAPTER IV

### HONORED IN ELECTION AND ORDINATION

It is difficult to read the inspired narrative of the election and ordination of "the seven" who are to be regarded as the first deacons without a feeling that the Holy Spirit wished in these processes to put honor upon the deaconship.

We discuss in this chapter five pertinent questions which must be practically faced by the churches, what number of deacons, what preparation for their election, how shall they be elected, what shall be their tenure of office, and what the method of setting them apart? These questions we discuss in order.

#### I. WHAT NUMBER OF DEACONS?

There is little in the New Testament to guide us at this point. The inspired apostles suggested the number *seven* in a church which numbered more than 5,000 members. The tendency to have a very considerable number of deacons, which has been marked in recent years, without doubt has grown out of the fact that deacons are rarely retired and therefore the churches accumulate a good deal of inactive material. Churches should have as many deacons as are needed to render the required service. A larger number, comprising those who are inactive, must tend to inefficiency. Doubtless many pastors and churches would wish to cut down the number

of deacons if it seemed practical to do so, and to limit the staff to those who are both active and efficient.

Since deacons are the servants of the churches, it would hardly seem desirable or proper to hold or elect men as deacons merely to honor them or to please those who hold them dear. Such inefficiency as may appear with deacons and such disposition as may be manifest to divert their proper responsibilities to other agencies can without doubt be traced in large measure to the gradual increase of numbers, without the retirement of those who cannot really serve. It may be quite as much a handicap to have too many deacons as to have too few. The question of the number of deacons must be determined by each church for itself in the light of its membership and its needs. We suggest that one deacon for every fifty to one hundred members might be a safe general rule.

## II. WHAT PREPARATION FOR THEIR ELECTION?

Manifestly a step which so vitally affects church ministry and usefulness should be taken with the utmost care. Earnest preparation and full instruction are needful. A favorable atmosphere is to be created. The qualifications for the office as laid down in the New Testament should be presented to the church with clearness and vigor. The ideals suggested for the deacon are simply the ideals which every believer should set before himself.

The coming election of deacons offers an excellent opportunity to discuss these definite standards in the Christian life. The pastor may welcome this opportunity. Messages setting forth the dignity and glory of the

church will be especially appropriate at this time. Sermons on the presence and leadership of the Holy Spirit in the church may be timely. If the church is thus prepared by instruction and prayer the people may be depended on to express in their ballots the mind of the Lord, and the election of deacons may well result in a revival and growth within the church, such as came with that first selection of deacons in the early church.

### III. HOW SHALL THE DEACONS BE ELECTED?

We have suggestion for our guidance in the method pursued in the choice of "the seven" as recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts. The apostles, having called the multitude of the disciples, said, "Look ye out among you . . . and the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose. . . ." It is clear, as we have already seen, that the apostles took no part in the election, made no nominations, but left the whole procedure in the hands of the church. The entire church, when assembled together, chose the seven men. How should a congregation move in such election?

There may be nominations on the floor in open meeting. This is a most unsatisfactory method. It does not give assurance that the consensus of judgment on the part of the congregation will be made known. Men who are not backward in taking the floor may complicate the situation by making impracticable nominations.

A committee may be appointed to nominate. This is, if possible, less satisfactory than nomination in open meetings. Nomination by a committee practically means election by a small group instead of the full congregation. Certainly the committee may suggest a larger

number from among whom the desired number may be selected. Even so, this method leaves much to be desired. A casual reading of the first verses in the sixth chapter of the Acts will hardly leave the impression that the seven were suggested by a committee. Somehow the whole multitude entered into the election and expressed its will.

We outline a method of electing deacons which is believed to be entirely fair and satisfactory. Without nomination or committee let the members present write on slips of paper the names of the men of their choice to the number agreed on by the church. Write these names on a large blackboard and ask that those present entitled to vote shall from this list write the names of those whom they wish to see elected. Let those who receive a majority of the votes cast be declared elected. Let the balloting continue until the desired number receive a majority of the votes. If it will facilitate matters, a member may move at any time to drop names receiving the smallest number of votes.

By way of illustration, let us suppose that four men are to be elected to the deaconship. The members present will prepare their ballots, each member naming on a slip of paper four men of his choice. All of the names thus voted will be placed on a blackboard, of course, with no mention of the number of votes each has received. The members will again prepare their ballots for the four men of their choice, taking the list from the names on the blackboard. Such names as receive a majority of the votes are to be declared elected, and the balloting continues until the requisite number of men are chosen.

## IV. WHAT SHOULD BE THE DEACON'S TENURE OF OFFICE?

"Once a deacon always a deacon." . . . By no means. No more than "once a pastor always a pastor." We should distinguish between a preacher and a pastor. A man once ordained continues to be a preacher until he surrenders his credentials or until the church of which he is a member demands their surrender. In the same sense, a man once ordained as a deacon continues to be a deacon until he yields up his deaconship. But, as a minister comes to be the pastor of a church only by choice of that church, so a deacon comes to be a deacon in a particular church only by the election of that church.

There are, we will say, various ways by which deacons may cease to be deacons in a given church.

1. *They May Take Their Letters and Seek Membership Elsewhere*

In such case a man does not actually cease to be a deacon but he does cease to be a deacon in the church from which he goes. His church letter should declare the fact that he is an ordained deacon. Whether he shall become an active deacon in the church to which he goes must be decided by the church itself. No church should adopt the policy of making all of the men who come as ordained deacons active, serving deacons in its own membership. Clearly such a policy is inadvisable, since men who have served well and wisely in one church may be inefficient in another church. In any case, the deacon's tenure of office in a given church ends, of course, when he severs his connection with that church.

2. *The Deacon's Tenure of Office May Be Ended at His Own Request*



The man who, under certain circumstances and at a given time in life was useful and efficient as a deacon, may under other circumstances and at another period of life be inefficient and useless as a deacon. In such cases deacons should voluntarily relinquish their deaconship. It should not be considered any reflection upon a man if he feels called upon to do this, any more than it is a reflection upon an ordained preacher to give up his credentials when he finds that he can no longer be used in the ministry. Rather, it should be counted a serious reflection on any man if he continues to fill the office of deacon after it is apparent that he cannot serve efficiently. Deacons who find that they cannot serve in the office may render a distinct service and bring the church under a debt of gratitude by voluntarily relinquishing the office. There need be no special formality. Let such deacon address a letter to the church through the clerk, asking that he be no longer recognized as an acting deacon. There are doubtless many good men who might thus render their churches valued service.

### *3. The Deacon's Active Service May Cease on Account of Advancing Years and the Burdens of Age*

If a brother is thus unable to serve efficiently he may ask to be relieved of the responsibilities of the deaconship. In such case the church will, of course, wish to continue the man as a deacon and carry his name on the retired list. Men who have served with special devotion and sacrifice may be named as deacons emeritus, just as a beloved and honored pastor is sometimes made pastor emeritus.

Perhaps any such move for retirement should be made only when deacons themselves take the initiative and

request it. The presence of aged men among the deacons, even when they are no longer actively efficient, may be a benediction.

*4. The Church for Sufficient Reasons May Ask a Deacon to Yield Up His Office*

(1) In case of lapse into gross immorality it may be the duty of the church to remove a deacon from his official position. If there should be evidences of repentance and a disposition to mend his ways, the church might retain him in its membership and at the same time insist upon his giving up his deaconship.

(2) In case of doctrinal lapse, such as would lead a deacon to question and challenge fundamental Bible teachings, the church may deem it wise to ask a deacon to relinquish his deaconship. Surely no man should serve as a high officer in the church who openly challenges essential Christian teachings.

(3) If a deacon should develop such disposition and attitude as will adversely affect his influence, if he should become a destroyer of fellowship and a fomenter of strife, if in any way he should become a definite hinderer of Christ's cause, the church may deem it wise and necessary to remove him from office.

*5. Deacons May Be Retired from Active Service by a Standing Order of the Church*

Thus a church may provide that the deacons shall serve for a period of three or five years and that at the expiration of this period they shall retire and be ineligible to fill the office again for one or more years.

In this connection we may venture some homely suggestions. An imperfect church cannot with propriety insist upon having perfect deacons. Much of the work

of the churches must necessarily be done by men who can lay no claim to being 100 per cent efficient. Deacons depend in large measure for their efficiency upon the sympathy and prayers of the church membership. They are to be appreciated and loved and encouraged rather than criticized and censured.

Inefficient deacons may be removed from office. On the other hand, inefficient deacons may be made efficient deacons. There is great gain in this. Churches generally will find it far more expedient, far more in harmony with the method of Jesus, to turn useless deacons into useful servants rather than to turn them out of office.

#### V. WHAT OF THE METHOD OF SETTING MEN APART FOR THE WORK OF THE DEACON?

Following the procedure of the apostles, who "prayed and laid their hands upon them," the churches do well to ordain deacons by prayer and a solemn laying on of hands. Besides being an apostolic precedent, such method of ordination offers due solemnity and impressiveness.

We raise here the question, Who should participate in the laying on of hands? In New Testament practice only ordained ministers shared in this service. There is no record that deacons ever took part in the laying on of hands. In this connection it should be said that we have no detailed account of any ordination after the deaconship came into being. It may seem wise to follow closely Scripture precedent and to suffer ministers only to render this ordaining service.



## **CHAPTER V**

# **HONORED IN ITS MINISTRY**

## **OUTLINE**

### **I. SERVING WITH THE PASTOR**

1. Deacons Have Special Relation to the Pastor's Financial Support
2. The Deacons Have Special Opportunity as Regards the Support of the Pastor's Pulpit Ministry
3. The Deacon Can Serve the Pastor by a Just Appreciation of His High Calling
4. The Deacon May Serve the Pastor by an Understanding Heart

### **II. SERVING THE CHURCH**

1. The Church Property
2. The Church Money
3. The Church Poor
4. The Church Ordinances
5. The Church Discipline
6. The Church Fellowship
7. Church Leadership

## CHAPTER V

### HONORED IN ITS MINISTRY

The final test of the deaconship lies in the fruit which it bears. Its highest honor lies in the fulness and richness of its ministry in the churches. As has been already suggested, no catalogue of duties is laid down in the New Testament. In the nature of the case no such specific guidance could be given. Such guidance was not needed then and is not needed now.

The deacons are to share with the pastor the burdens of church ministry; they are to shield the pastor and relieve him of burdens so that he may devote himself to a spiritual ministry.

Further, deacons are to serve the church especially in the material phases of its life. While the emphasis is placed upon these phases as the special responsibility of deacons, these officers are, of course, broadly to serve and build the churches, to the end that they may function in all proper ways.

We suggest first some ways in which deacons may serve with the pastor and then indicate some ways in which they may serve the church.

#### I. SERVING WITH THE PASTOR

The office of deacon, as we have seen, came into being in an effort to relieve overburdened preachers. The new officers were to find their usefulness in dividing and thus

reducing the burdens of the apostles. It seems fair to assume, therefore, that deacons may find a large measure of usefulness in a wise and tactful support of the pastor. Here, as elsewhere, it is difficult and even hazardous to undertake specific suggestions. We must limit ourselves necessarily to proposals which are more or less general.

### *1. Deacons Have Special Relation to the Pastor's Financial Support*

This accords with well-established tradition. Deacons should see that the pastor's salary is adequate and that it is paid promptly and regularly. The question is ever recurring, On what basis shall the compensation of the pastor be determined? Many elements enter into the question. Looking particularly toward the pastor there are some considerations which should be kept in mind in seeking a just answer to our question. We offer here a brief statement.

(1) The long years required in preparation are not to be overlooked. The time of training is far longer than for the usual trades or for commercial occupations.

(2) The comparatively brief period in which the minister can confidently count on a fair income must also be remembered. At the time when other professions are offering their largest returns, men in the ministry are often reduced as regards their income. Ministers may generally count thirty years as their really productive period, while many other vocations offer a period of increasing earnings through fifty years.



(3) It must be remembered also that the pastor's leadership makes it most desirable for him to be a generous giver.

(4) The pastor must devote himself to his ministry and cannot conduct the profitable side lines which many other men carry.

(5) The pastor, being a salaried man, cannot build up a property or business on whose income he can depend when the time comes for him to retire to private life.

These and other similar considerations well may be borne in mind in determining what is an equitable support for the pastor.

*2. The Deacons Have Special Opportunity as Regards the Support of the Pastor's Pulpit Ministry*

Loving, responsive hearers make good preachers. Sympathetic, prayerful hearers are a joyful inspiration to those who proclaim Christ's gospel.

We have classic illustration of this in the case of Paul on Mars Hill; he preached a careful and powerful sermon. The results were disappointing. "Some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." Peter preached at Pentecost. Power was manifest and three thousand were added in a day. Peter was surrounded by a praying band, men and women who through ten blessed days had waited in worship and prayer. Paul stood alone, being surrounded by scoffing unbelievers.

Deacons who faithfully and prayerfully support the pastor in his public ministry are to the pastor a blessing beyond words. This is especially true as to the night services and the prayer meeting, which may be a special trial to the pastor. The deacon by all means should be

what Mr. Gladstone was wont to call a "twicer." He should be as much concerned for the evening service as for the morning service. Since the prayer meeting bears heavily on the heart of the pastor and frequently constitutes one of his serious problems, the deacon, of course, is to give faithful co-operation in making that meeting the blessing it should be in the church.

### *3. The Deacon Can Serve the Pastor by a Just Appreciation of His High Calling*

Pastor F. F. Brown called a deacon over the telephone. The deacon was a very busy man who held important civic and commercial positions. The pastor was in his study at the church. The deacon was in his office on the tenth floor of a downtown office building.

Said the pastor, "Deacon, I called to see if you were in; I am coming to see you."

"No," replied the deacon, "you are not coming to see me. I am coming to see you. I will be right over."

"But," protested the pastor, "I merely want to see you on church business. It is good of you to give me your time in the midst of a busy day. I am coming to see you."

The deacon said, "Pastor, we will not waste perfectly good time discussing the matter; I will be in your office in ten minutes."

In a few minutes the busy man was in the pastor's study. "Pastor," he said, "I want to explain once and for all time. You are engaged in the biggest of all business. Your business is vastly more important than mine. Your time is far more valuable than mine. Whenever you need me I am going to come to you. Let that be understood." That deacon gave to the pastor the highest of

all service in showing an appreciation of the pastor's office and mission.

*4. The Deacon May Serve the Pastor by an Understanding Heart*

Without it there can be no warm affection or helpful relation between the deacon and his pastor. A discerning spirit which understands, what can mean so much to the pastor as this? Whatever other virtues the deacon may possess, whatever zeal may move him, if he does not have this fine understanding, this simple discernment, he cannot enrich the pastor's ministry.

The pastor must have some courtly souls, some discerning spirits who understand, on whom he can lean. When the heart of the pastor is weary with toil, when his soul droops with despondency, when other resources fail him, he longs for a group, it matters little if it must be a small group, which knows and loves and understands. Happy the pastor who finds such inner circle among his deacons, men with understanding hearts. Happy and honored is the deacon who can enter into this inner circle. To this group is given to enter into the Holy of holies of the pastor's heart. These deacons immeasurably enrich the pastor and in return they receive grace for grace.

## II. SERVING THE CHURCH

We list some specific services which deacons may render in the churches, leaving for the following chapters a discussion of some broader and more general ministries.

*1. The Church Property*

The deacons are to care for the church property. This was the specific assignment of the first deacons; they

cared for money and other property possessed by the company of believers. All churches must hold property of some kind. There is the building or, it may be, there are the buildings, in which the church worships and conducts its varied ministry. Perhaps there is the home provided for the pastor. The church may hold yet other property. All of the property owned by the church should be in charge of the deacons, subject always to the will of the church.

(1) General care, upkeep and repairs, all things which concern the church property, come naturally under the supervision of the deacons.

(2) General uses. There must be some central body which has authority to determine the various uses of the church plant. Shall permission to use the auditorium be granted? How shall conflict of engagements among various groups in the use of the social rooms be prevented? These and many similar questions will arise. In general, the deacons may well determine these questions. For convenience the deacons may appoint a "house committee," which will determine all less important questions, referring more important decisions to the full body of deacons.

The various organizations, such as the Sunday school, the Training Union and the W.M.U. will usually allot space for their own classes, departments, and other subdivisions. The house committee may be called in conference to avoid conflicts or duplications.

(3) General economies. The use of electricity or gas is to be constantly guarded. Lights turned on in a room for temporary use should not be left burning for hours afterward. Indeed, constant vigilance should be exercised

to reduce the light bill. A millionaire merchant declares that he turns off more lights in his department store in any given day than any two of his employees. The janitor should be trained to exercise all proper economies. Repairs, simple and easily made, may save much expense in replacement. It is safe to say that a careful economy running through the details of church ministry might in the aggregate save hundreds of thousands of dollars for our churches.

The deacons may wish occasionally to appoint a special committee to make observations and suggest and propose methods by which economies may be effected.

(4) Insurance. Churches should be protected by the various forms of insurance which prudent business institutions are accustomed to carry. Few churches are as well protected against fire hazards as they should be. Many churches have no protection against wind and storm. Even while these lines are being written a pastor comes with the tidings that his beautiful church edifice has burned. It is a story all too familiar; through some misunderstanding the insurance had been allowed to lapse, and the loss of the building puts the very life of the church in jeopardy.

## *2. The Church Money*

As the deacons are to manage, under the direction of the church, the permanent property, so also they are to care for the money contributed for the support of the church and for the extension of the gospel. Subject to the will of the church, they should gather and handle and disburse church funds. Is it too much to say that the deacons as a body constitute in some large sense the treasurership of the church? There is, to be

sure, a special officer elected by the church who renders the actual technical service of receiving and disbursing church funds and keeping all financial records. Such officer is usually selected from the body of deacons, since he sustains special relations to that body.

There is definite propriety in having the deacons wait upon the congregation for the usual offerings. Generally the deacons should sit together on the front seats through the first part of the service, at least until the time for taking the offering. When the pastor announces the offering, the deacons will stand together in front of the pulpit. The pastor will offer a brief, impressive prayer. The senior deacon or a deacon selected for this purpose will pass the plate to his fellow deacons and, along with the pastor, they will make their offerings. The senior deacon will then pass the plates to the deacons and they will wait upon the people. When the offering is taken the deacons, in sufficient number, will walk back down the aisles in pairs and place the offering plates on the table before the pulpit. The organist may play softly, but no song should be sung while the offering is being taken.

### 3. *The Church Poor*

From the earliest times the deacons have been expected to offer sympathy and succor to those who may be poor and unfortunate. Confessedly we have here a delicate and important service. Churches usually co-operate with each other and with other agencies to relieve general poverty. This seems to be wise, since business methods and careful investigation are needful, both for the service of the poor and the protection of the public. Apart from such general ministry to the



poor, there will be situations in which the deacons on behalf of the church may be called upon to minister to the unfortunate by active sympathy and actual contributions. The deacons, acting perhaps through a committee, may well represent the church in such ministry.

#### 4. *The Church Ordinances*

The deacons are to provide for the church ordinances, baptism and the Memorial Supper. This would seem to be perfectly natural. Indeed, this custom seems to have prevailed through the centuries. Such is the sanctity of the symbolic immersion and of the supper, there seems to be peculiar propriety in having the pastor and deacons, the regularly constituted officers of the church, to join together in the administration of these ordinances. The deacons may well name a committee of women to assist girls and women in their preparation for the ordinance of baptism.

#### 5. *The Church Discipline*

Because of their personal character and the nature of their office, the deacons have special responsibility for guarding and guiding such members as may be wayward or indifferent. Church discipline as far as possible should be formative and corrective. Its end is to save and safeguard. In cases of open and flagrant sin which demand action on the part of the church, the deacons may properly take the initiative, prefer charges, gather evidence, and guide the church in such course as may be deemed wise.

#### 6. *The Church Fellowship*

As we have seen, the office of deacon grew out of an effort to restore a disturbed fellowship and to avert a threatened storm. Naturally deacons find a fruitful



sphere of service in healing hurts and maintaining or restoring fellowship. Surely it is a blessed service, as needful as it is difficult. Alas, for the hurt and harm which come to our churches from broken fellowship. Is it too much to say that there never was a church fuss which might not have been prevented or cured by the wise service of peace-loving deacons? Who can estimate the good which has been accomplished by faithful deacons who have wisely striven to allay feeling and to preserve peace?

### *7. Church Leadership*

The progress of the churches must wait largely upon the deacons. Sometimes churches have been able to make some progress against the restraining influence of uninformed and visionless deacons. Other groups, such as the workers in the Sunday school, the Training Union, and the W.M.U. may enable the church under pastoral guidance to go forward without the help and leadership of the deacons. Leadership on the part of the deacons is no longer the easy and simple thing it was in other days when the churches were living the simple life. Happy the church which has deacons who are the best-informed and the most forward-looking group in the entire church organization.

*How one deacon made a great church.* Dr. Samuel H. Greene, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of his pastorate of the Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D. C., declared that the growth of that great church through the years was due very largely to the influence and ministry of one deacon. That deacon had solemnly dedicated himself to the task of building the Calvary Church. He had sought diligently the highest

and finest spiritual culture. He had studied faithfully and broadly the whole large question of church growth. Thus he became a devout Christian, a wise counselor and a zealous worker. His quiet influence pervaded the church life, his zeal inspired the deacons, and his discerning wisdom cheered the pastor. The testimony thus gratefully borne by Dr. Greene to the wonderful influence of a good deacon might be practically duplicated by other pastors into the many thousands.

## **CHAPTER VI**

# **HONORED BY THE DEACON HIMSELF**

## **OUTLINE**

### **I. A THREEFOLD IDEAL**

1. To Be a Growing Christian
2. To Be an Informed Churchman
  - (1) The Sunday school
  - (2) The Baptist Training Union
  - (3) The W.M.U.
  - (4) The Brotherhood
3. To Be a Denominational Factor

### **II. SUGGESTIONS FOR REACHING THE IDEAL**

1. Give Attention to Reading
2. Give Attention to Study
3. Attend Helpful Meetings

### **III. THE DEACON IN THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION**

1. Present-Day Church Organization

Six distinct ministries, directed by six distinct groups

  - (1) Worship services
  - (2) Church finances
  - (3) The teaching ministry
  - (4) The training ministry
  - (5) The ministry of women
  - (6) The ministry of men
2. The Assignment of the Deacons in This Organization
3. A Cabinet or General Council for This Organization

## CHAPTER VI

### HONORED BY THE DEACON HIMSELF

The burden of the message set forth in these pages is that the pastor, the church, and all the estates of Israel are to put honor upon the deaconship. We seek to know the mind of the Spirit and to think his thoughts after him concerning this exalted church office. It remains for the deacon himself above all others to put honor upon his office. "I magnify mine office." This was the word of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. It is the ultimate secret of his fruitful ministry. The deacon may well hang this motto on the walls of his heart: "I magnify my office."

The deacon honors his deaconship when he seeks such equipment and such self-culture as his office requires. When a man is called to the ministry he is expected to spend long years in college and seminary seeking preparation for his high calling. When one is asked to teach a Sunday school class he immediately meets the slogan, "Every teacher a trained teacher," and he is asked to pursue extensive studies in order to equip himself for his teaching task. Too long it has been the custom to call men into the office of deacon with no suggestion that they shall seek and find equipment for the new and difficult service to which they are called. Happily the old day is passing and a new day is dawning as regards training for deacons.

Assuming that the deacon has been elected to office by reason of his Christian deportment and of certain equipment for the office, how is he to seek fuller equipment and the culture for which he must long as he faces the duties of his high office? We first set forth a three-fold ideal toward which every deacon will do well to strive, and then we seek to point the way to the attainment of that ideal.

## I. A THREEFOLD IDEAL

The deacon may well adopt as his life motto the noble resolve of Paul: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus" (ASV). The deacon's ideal may well comprise the following.

### 1. *To Be a Growing Christian*

It is an unutterable calamity if the deacon shall cease to grow in his Christian life. The end of growth is the beginning of death. Where life is there must be growth. The Apostle to the Gentiles declared what ought to be the desire, yea even the longing, of every believer: "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (ASV).

### 2. *To Be an Informed Churchman*

The deacon as an honored officer in the church should be distinctively a churchman. He may sustain many other relations, he may give support to lodges, clubs, and various civic and fraternal orders, but his first devotion, his supreme allegiance, should be given to his church.

While this is true of every man it is in a peculiarly binding sense true of the deacon.

The deacon should be an informed churchman. He should be an intelligent student of church ministries. There are four phases of church life which demand special attention at the hands of the deacon. The deacon should be informed concerning the organization, motives, and ministries of these phases of church life.

(1) *The Sunday school*.—It is not too much to ask that the deacon shall know the modern Sunday school. In some cases the only Sunday school which deacons know is the little ungraded one-room school which they attended in their boyhood days. Sunday school organization, Sunday school management, and Sunday school building have become a science both complex and difficult. Men may not come to understand this science merely by attending a men's class nor yet by teaching a class themselves. Men cannot come to know this science merely by being a part of a well-conducted Sunday school. For a deacon entrusted with leadership in the church to be uninformed concerning this institution is little less than a calamity. For a deacon thus uninformed not to know that he does not know and yet to assume lightly to pass upon questions affecting the Sunday school adds elements of special peril.

(2) *The Training Union*.—Originally this was a single B.Y.P.U. in which young people received training. In late years it has developed into a graded church program which offers broad development and training for the church members from the Junior age on to maturity. Policies have been adjusted, methods have been perfected, literature has been produced and the Training Union now

offers a balanced program for the cultivation of character and for training in church membership. So quietly, so without observation, has this system grown that some men otherwise well-informed as to church developments may be entirely uninformed regarding this department of church ministry. The deacon who wishes to continue his growth should be a member of an Adult union.

(3) *The W.M.U.*—Here again we had originally a society of women whereas we have now a full-rounded system, a complete cycle of organizations, all under the direction of the women of the church. This system of organizations comprises the Missionary Society, the Y.W.A., the G.A., the R.A., and the Sunbeam Band. Here again methods have been remade, policies have been readjusted, literature abundant and helpful has been produced, and the W.M.U. now offers a full missionary training extending from childhood up through mature life.

It is hardly to be expected that men will grasp fully this rather complicated development and this complex machinery. Officers in the church should know enough to be sympathetic at least with these good women.

(4) *The Brotherhood.*—The effort to reach and develop men must rank as most significant among church movements. Important as it is that our young people shall be enlisted and trained, vital as it is that our women shall be organized and developed, it is surely not less vital or less important that our men shall be informed and interested. There is a widespread upheaval, a deepening concern, a disposition on the part of men to find themselves and to fill their heaven-given place in the churches. Just what form this development is to



assume, just what type of organization is desirable for men, these are questions which may well await future development. That the layman's movement is destined to move and to rank with the most significant of all church developments there can be no doubt. The deacon may well be a thoughtful student of this movement, conversant with its literature, and informed concerning its achievements.

### 3. *To Be a Denominational Factor*

Out beyond the church, in the vast co-operative enterprises conducted jointly by the churches, there is a most fascinating realm which may well challenge every church officer. The deacon who fails to enter and serve in this realm denies to himself blessings and opportunities which are rich beyond compare. By so much he consigns his own church to narrows and shoals instead of leading it out into wide, inviting fields.

There is an old man who has gathered a vast fortune and is resting on well-earned laurels. Many years ago as a young churchman he attended denominational gatherings and felt the thrill of world movements for the extension of Christ's gospel. Gradually he let the cares and burdens of a growing law practice and of an increasing fortune crowd out his interest in the expanding, conquering cause of Christ. He must know now that at this point he made the mistake of his whole career. He has money to the point of superfluity; he has a sense of power and of achievement; he has many satisfactions. Alas he is alone and lonely. He could well afford to part with half of his vast fortune for the satisfying memories of battles fought and burdens borne in the service of his denomination.

For his own sake and for the sake of his church every deacon should set his heart on being a denominational factor.

## II. SUGGESTIONS FOR REACHING THE IDEAL

We have suggested a threefold ideal. We now suggest a threefold method for the attainment of this ideal. The field here is exceedingly wide and we can only make some general suggestions.

### 1. *Give Attention to Reading*

This admonition was given long ago to a young church officer. If it was appropriate in Paul's day when all literature was meager and books were expensive, it is much more timely in our day.

(1) A suggested beginning and base for such reading:

The first piece of advice we could give is, *Read the Book*. Beginning with the Gospels we should read them over and over and over until we are familiar with the contents. This is the first step.

When we have done this for a time a strange thing happens. We find ourselves thinking in our idle moments of some phrases or incidents we have read. Thoughts "pop" into our heads, connected in some way with what we have been reading. As we possess the Scriptures we find that the Scriptures tend to possess us.

The Spirit of God, the divine teacher, cannot work in a vacuum. If we fill the mind with the priceless sayings of Jesus, and with the gospel story, the Spirit can take that material and use it to illumine our minds. So silently and unobtrusively does the Spirit work that we cannot distinguish between his inspiration and our own thought. Ideas occur to us. We cannot trace their

origin. But they grow out of our knowledge of the Scriptures through the action of the Spirit of God.

The Bible is a gold mine. The deeper we dig the more gold we will find. The work is pleasant; the result is a deepened spiritual life, a more intimate knowledge of God, and a closer walk with him.

Since the early development of the church is set forth in the Acts and in Paul's epistles, a frequent reading and careful study of these books must be especially profitable for church officers. The Acts may be read at one sitting in less than two hours. The book might be profitably read once each week for a series of weeks.

(2) There are certain periodicals which ought to find a place in the home of every deacon. We cannot offer an exhaustive list. We can only indicate some which are of most importance.

The denominational weekly paper ought to come first in any list. It is indispensable.

*The Commission* and *Southern Baptist Home Missions* are magazines treating missionary ideals and affording missionary information.

We might go much more widely afield but the periodicals named should be in the hands of all deacons in any case.

(3) Books are, of course, abundant. Besides the books listed for study which will be discussed in a later paragraph there are books older and newer which will offer food and inspiration.

## 2. Give Attention to Study

When Paul admonished a young church officer to "study," he doubtless meant that he should be earnest or diligent. Even so, study is a sure evidence of earnest diligence. Men who face serious responsibilities may

well study, study the suggestions and methods of others, study underlying principles, as these are set forth in helpful books.

Deacons have been for long at some disadvantage regarding study courses to be pursued in preparation for their special service. In recent years helpful books have been coming from the presses of the country touching all phases of the work of the deacon. In the course of study of which this book is a part several such books are to be found.

### 3. *Attend Helpful Meetings*

Here again no complete catalogue of such meetings can be offered.

Surely church officers should be diligent in attendance upon general denominational gatherings. Among these which are regularly held, we may name the district association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Besides these there are special assemblies and conferences which are in their nature both inspirational and educational. The deacon may well put one or more of these meetings into his schedule for each year.

## III. THE DEACON IN THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The deaconship was placed in the church organization by the Holy Spirit. The office had its beginnings in the early days of the New Testament church. Along with the office of pastor this office has persisted through the centuries since the church was given. When a new church is constituted the first imperative need is for a pastor and deacons. As has been said often, these officers are not essential to the being of a church, but they are essential to its well-being. The deaconship is honored

when it fills its proper place in the church organization and functions in such way as to set forward the whole work of the church.

In the nature of the case church organization is not fixed and inflexible. The New Testament offers basal principles and outlines certain fundamental conceptions. These are to be observed always and everywhere. Building on these and guided by them the churches are to fill out such lines of organization as will enable them to serve most efficiently.

### *1. Present-Day Church Organization*

When churches are small in their membership and necessarily circumscribed in their ministry the organization is correspondingly simple. When churches are larger and their ministries are extended they multiply their agencies and departmentize their organization. Such churches develop departmental groups which specialize in definite lines of service. Each departmental group is led to seek equipment and efficiency in its own special ministry, while all are closely bound to each other in one common bond of fellowship.

Without seeking to be exhaustive we may indicate some departmental groups suggesting the central and distinct ministry on which each group is supposed to concentrate its efforts. The outstanding lines of ministry may be summed up somewhat as follows:

- (1) The worship services
- (2) The church finances
- (3) The teaching ministry
- (4) The training ministry
- (5) The ministry of women
- (6) The ministry of men

These departments of ministry are assigned to groups of workers as follows:

(1) The worship services are to be directed and ordered by the pastor.

(2) The business of the church and its finances constitute the special and distinct assignment of the deacons.

(3) The teaching ministry is committed to the Sunday school with its cabinet of officers and teachers.

(4) The training service is entrusted to the Baptist Training Union organization with its officers and leaders.

(5) The ministry of women is committed to the W.M.U. organization with its officers and leaders.

(6) The ministry of men is not yet so clearly defined. Let us say that it is committed to the Brotherhood or some other similar organization, with its duly selected leaders.

These departments or agencies constitute the chief elements which together comprise church organization.

## 2. *The Assignment of the Deacons in This Organization*

As has been suggested the care of church property and the management of church finance constitute the distinct assignment of the deacons. There are ways in which by intelligent interest and sympathy the deacons may touch and help every department of church ministry. Their peculiar charge, however, their distinct responsibility, concerns church finance. Deacons may find in this vital sphere which is indisputably theirs a challenging field with ample outlet for their best endeavors. Let each group devote itself to its special task. Let the Sunday school group specialize in its phase of the educational ministry; let its members study Sunday school or-



ganization and methods; let them master the principles of teaching; let them seek the highest efficiency in their special line. Likewise let the deacons be specialists in New Testament stewardship and masters of the science of church finance. Such success and enlargement as have come to the Sunday school have come largely because the Sunday school group has devoted itself to the ministry of the teaching service. This group has sought specialized training and given itself with sacrificial devotion to its peculiar tasks.

There are those who believe that the next significant development in church life is to be marked by a similar devotement of deacons to an effort to solve the problems involved in the money business of the churches, and to achieve a leadership which will assure a wise and proper solution of these problems.

### *3. A Cabinet or General Council for This Organization*

There must be in any democracy a group of trusted leaders, who in a general way and with due regard to the nature of a democracy may guide and safeguard the larger policies and the general programs. The necessity for some such guiding council in the churches is, of course, the greater by reason of the emphasis which is increasingly placed on departmentization. The various departments of church ministry must be blended and harmonized into such unity as will enable the church to function as a whole.

This unifying of spirit and effort may come largely through the pervading influence of the pastor who sustains direct relation to each departmental group. It is further suggested that the responsible leaders of the several departments may constitute together a kind of



church council, a general steering committee, which may serve in unifying and harmonizing the various church ministries. Such bringing together of leaders in the various departments for prayer and conference may seem desirable on many accounts. Such a council may be practical rather than official in its nature. It might have stated meetings or it might be called together when occasion seems to arise. In all churches there is such a general guiding group. Usually the group is not formally organized or officially recognized, but it exists nevertheless.

The departmental ministries and the proposed church council are set forth in tabular form:

## THE CHURCH MINISTRIES

### THE PASTOR GUIDING

1. The worship services. Directed by the pastor.

2. The church finances. Entrusted to the deacons.

3. The teaching service. Guided by the Sunday school council.

4. The training service. Committed to the Training Union leaders.

5. The ministry of women. Directed by W.M.U. officers.

6. The ministry of men. Guided by Brotherhood leaders.

## THE CHURCH COUNCIL

### THE PASTOR PRESIDING

1. The pastor, with his assistants or associates.

2. The chairman and secretary of the deacons.

3. The superintendent with the department heads of the Sunday school.

4. The director and department heads of the Training Union.

5. The president and secretary of the W.M.U.

6. The president and secretary of the Brotherhood.



## **CHAPTER VII**

# **HONORED IN SOUL-WINNING AND MISSIONS**

## **OUTLINE**

- I. HONORED IN SOUL-WINNING**
  - 1. The Obligation
  - 2. The Opportunity
  - 3. The Equipment
- II. HONORED IN MISSIONS**
  - 1. The Deacon Should Know Missions
  - 2. The Deacon Should Pray for Missions
  - 3. The Deacon Should Make His Church the Channel of His Gifts
  - 4. The Deacon Should Protect Missions

## CHAPTER VII

# HONORED IN SOUL-WINNING AND MISSIONS

## I. HONORED IN SOUL-WINNING

The best service of the deacon, his highest function, is winning men to Christ. This privilege of seeking the lost is primary and fundamental in the Christian life. It constitutes the surest evidence of personal loyalty to the Saviour. It lends a blessed flavor to one's life. It is a test and sure indication of personal and effective witness in testimony. In no way may the deaconship be more truly vindicated and honored than in perennial soul-winning effort.

### 1. *The Obligation*

It is incumbent on all believers to bear personal witness and make direct effort to win the lost to confess and follow Jesus. The obligation rests with peculiar weight upon the deacon as an honored church officer. Pastors who bear on their hearts a burden for the lost are primarily concerned that their deacons shall set the example and know the joy of personal effort in behalf of sinful men. Such pastors long to lead their Sunday school teachers and all other groups into such personal effort. But they have altogether exceptional concern about the deacons, as officers in the church and as men who may be expected to set a pace for the entire church community. Right well the pastor knows that if deacons

will lead the way in this service, the whole church will be influenced and blessed by their example.

Dr. Johnston Myers, in the midst of his wonderful ministry in Cincinnati, Ohio, gathered his deacons, some thirty in number, for an intimate and informal conference on this greatest of all questions, the quest for souls. He poured out his heart. He told them of his deep concern because men were not being saved. He protested his feeling that the blame could not be laid at his door; he had done the best he knew in tears by day and night. He asked the group of men how many of them had ever won a soul to Christ. Only two of them could declare any hope that they had ever won a lost soul. They knelt together in prayer and the meeting ended.

One of the deacons, an elderly banker, went home with a new light in his heart and a new resolve stirring in his soul. He had four sons, no one of whom was saved and no one of whom had ever heard his father's voice in prayer. Asking his wife to retire or spend the time in prayer, he waited to meet these sons as they should return home. George, the eldest, came first. The father met him at the door; "Come in, George; I have something very important to talk to you about." Then he told the young man of his grief and shame for his neglect in that he had never spoken to him about the Saviour. In a few minutes the father led the son to accept Christ as Lord. Before he slept that father had the assurance that his four sons had embraced Christ. The next Sunday morning those four upstanding young men came down to the altar and made confession of their faith in Jesus.

The following Monday morning, Dr. Myers relates, the deacon called into his office a trusted employee.

"John," he said, "did you know that I was a Christian?" The astonished man said, "Major, of course I knew you were a Christian and a deacon. Everybody in this city must know that." Then the man spoke with quiet dignity: "John, you knew I was a Christian; have you ever wondered that I did not speak to you about being a Christian?" Deeply touched, the young man said: "Good sir, I have many times wondered that you did not speak to me about the Saviour." Then the deacon declared his grief for his own sinful neglect and asked to be forgiven. Together the two men knelt in the banker's private office and speedily the lost man was rejoicing in a new-found hope.

Dr. Myers declares that in a few weeks that deacon had won seventeen men to Christ and church membership.

Such incidents could be multiplied indefinitely. A church in a certain city was dying with the dry rot of respectability and the paralysis of indifference. The pastor's heart was breaking because souls were not being saved. He called his deacons together and told them he was going to resign.

"Why, Pastor, what is the matter? We never had such attendance and never enjoyed such prosperity. Our church is being edified and our people built up."

"It is of no avail," said the pastor, "so long as we are failing in the main thing. Not only am I ready to offer my resignation but I want you deacons to resign also unless we can lead the church to seek and win the lost."

Then the pastor began with the senior deacon and went down through the entire company.

"Do you remember that you ever led a soul to Christ?"

Not one of them could give an affirmative answer. The men went home lamenting the outburst of pastoral

enthusiasm. But not so easily could they dismiss the question which the pastor had urged with burning concern. The senior deacon, in secret, confessed his failure, took up his cross and went straight to the men in his employ with the urgent plea that they seek the Lord. Other deacons caught his spirit. Dr. T. Clagett Skinner who tells the story declares that the very next Sunday thirty persons were received into the fellowship of the church.

## *2. The Opportunity*

Peculiar opportunity is afforded the deacon regarding personal soul-winning effort. The obligation which rests upon him is emphasized by the enlarged opportunities which open to him as a church officer. Such effort is expected of church officers and hence the way lies open to them.

Inasmuch as the deacon is a layman engaging like other men in ordinary business pursuits he has some advantage over the pastor in turning men to Christ. When the pastor approaches lost men there may be the impression of professionalism. The pastor is expected to make such approaches. It is in line with his calling. Thus when the pastor gets into his car and drives across the city or out into the country and goes into a home and draws the family together, asking them to accept Christ, this is expected of the pastor. But let the deacon drive over to a neighbor's home, call the family together and tell the old story of redeeming love; in this case there can be no suspicion or taint of professionalism.

When the deacon has finished a business transaction with a friend or acquaintance he can say: "Now I have tried to be fair with you always. Will you let me say



that I want you to be a Christian? Christ needs you, the church needs you, and you need Christ." Such simple witness persistently and faithfully borne by the deacon whose life supports his word may turn many to righteousness and cover a multitude of sins.

The opportunity for witness bearing and personal soul-winning presses on every hand. Perhaps more than we know or would think, the people with whom we come in contact are waiting and hungering for just such approach.

A Christian traveler alighted from a cab. The driver had opened the door to let him out. As he paid the fare he warmly grasped the man's hand and said: "Good-night, I hope to meet you again in glory." He then went into the house and retired. About midnight there was a knock at his door:

"That cabman has come back and says he must see you tonight."

When the big, broad-shouldered man was shown to the room, tears rolling down his cheeks like rain, he said, "If I meet you in glory I have got to turn around. I have come to ask you to pray with me."

### *3. The Equipment*

Dr. E. O. Kernahan, the apostle of Visitation Evangelism, demands only two qualifications of those who under his leadership undertake to win souls. One is sincerity; the other is a willingness to try. These are fundamental elements in the equipment needed for individual evangelism.

A simple, unlettered man came to trust Christ after he had passed middle life. Straightway he besought his

family to turn to the Lord. Having won those in his own house he went after his friends and neighbors. People who had lived long in the community without having anyone approach them with the Christian plea were surprised but pleased when this illiterate man came with transparent earnestness, entreating them to turn to God. Mrs. Katherine S. Cronk, who tells the story, declares that in two years this humble laborer won more people to Christ than all of the other members of the church together.

While sincerity and a willingness to try are sufficient equipment for a beginning, the soul-winner will wish to go further and seek fuller equipment. Happily we have many practical books which offer suggestive guidance. Among these we may name the following:

*\*How to Bring Men to Christ*—R. A. Torrey

*How to Win to Christ*—P. E. Burroughs

Church officers in ever-increasing numbers are studying in special classes with a view to seeking enlarged preparation for the high task of personal evangelism. Pastors and evangelists find in the leadership of such classes wide-open doors of usefulness. Here, as elsewhere in Christian service, confidence and skill come from experience and result from persistent effort.

## II. HONORED IN MISSIONS

The deacon is a keyman, both in the church and in the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptist churches. The deacon honors himself and his deaconship when he walks under the burden of a lost world and concerns himself with the measures which look toward world conquest.

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\*Out of print.

As the deacon is to function in the winning of souls in his own circle and community, so also is he to share in the joint effort of the churches to evangelize the whole world. Whatever concerns and engages the church must likewise concern and engage the deacon as a trusted officer in the church.

In this chapter we propose that the deacon should know missions, that the deacon should pray for missions, that he should advocate missions, and that he should protect the interests of missions in the budget and program of his church.

### 1. *The Deacon Should Know Missions*

This is basal; a man's interests never go beyond the line of his information. Charles Lamb said in his lisping, hesitating way that he hated a certain man. A friend expressed surprise:

"Why, Mr. Lamb, I did not know that you knew the man."

"Oh," replied Mr. Lamb, "I do not know him. If I knew him I could not hate him."

The man who is opposed to missions or is indifferent to missions does not know missions. The man who knows missions cannot be opposed to missions, nor can he even be indifferent to the missionary appeal.

Two men fairly illustrate the results which may be expected from a firsthand knowledge of mission work.\* One of the men was a prosperous businessman, while the other was a successful lawyer.

"Our minister is always talking to us about sacrifice. I am getting tired of it. He expects us to be giving all

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\**Concerning the Collection*, by M. E. Dodd. (Now out of print.)

the time, and seems to think that the church is the greatest institution in the world."

"Perhaps he is right. But I agree with you that we can't always be giving to the church. There are other things we must think of. I am afraid our minister is visionary rather than practical."

The two men shortly after this conversation went with a party on a tour around the world. Tarrying for a season in Korea and guided by a missionary they witnessed a scene which interested and amused them. A boy was pulling a crude wooden plow while an old man guided it. The lawyer took a snapshot, remarking as he did so: "That's a curious picture! I suppose they are very poor?"

"Yes, they are poor," the missionary replied. "That is the family of Chi Nouri. When the church was being built they were eager to give something to it. They had no money, so they sold their only ox, and gave the money to the church. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves."

The incident deeply impressed the two men. It gave them a little insight into the sacrifices made by the missionary and his converts. It shed a bit of light on the nature and fruits of missionary effort. When the pair reached home, the lawyer showed the picture to his pastor and related the incident.

"I want to double my pledge to the church," he said. "And give me some plow work to do, please. I have never known what sacrifice for the church meant. A converted heathen taught me. I am ashamed to say I have never yet given anything to my church that cost me anything."

If Christian men who are blessed with this world's goods could only know the lives which the missionaries are living and the fruits which these lives are bearing as they witness for Christ, it is safe to say that there would be no lack of money to carry forward the various missionary enterprises.

### *2. The Deacon Should Pray for Missions*

The greatest and most needed of all contributions to missions may be made through prayer. Mrs. Katherine S. Cronk declares that we have here the limitless opportunity:

There are limits to the opportunities and possibilities of all methods of work save one. The only limitless opportunity is prayer. He who has learned to pray knows no limitations of geography: he can cross oceans and climb mountains. He knows no limitations of poverty: any needed blessing is his. He overcomes the limitations of weakness; his strength is made the strength of ten and single-handed he puts a thousand to flight.

Prayer has sent out missionaries and supported them. Prayer has built mission stations and equipped hospitals. Prayer has opened closed doors and given entrance into the hearts of men.

### *3. The Deacon Should Make His Church the Channel of His Gifts*

This will put honor upon the church. It will promote harmony in plan and thought. Assuming that the tithe of income will be made a minimum basis of giving, Pas-

tor M. E. Dodd suggests seven reasons for giving this tithe through the church.\*

- (1) To give my tithe through my church is *scriptural*.
- (2) To give my tithe through my church is *simple*.
- (3) To give my tithe through my church is *sensible*.  
No citizen would think of designating his taxes to one particular department of the government.
- (4) To give my tithe through my church is *serviceable*.  
There it covers every phase of human need—physical, mental, spiritual.
- (5) To give my tithe through my church is *sufficient*.  
If all would do this, there would be no lack.
- (6) To give my tithe through my church is *successful*.  
All causes share proportionately out of this common church treasury. On the direct method, some get all, and others nothing.

#### 4. *The Deacon Should Protect Missions*

The churches are called to finance a twofold ministry. They must gather the funds needed in their own direct work; they must maintain their own buildings, they must care for necessary running expenses and they must pay the salaries of their employed workers. In a word, the churches must meet their own local expenses. This constitutes only a part of the obligation which rests upon the churches. They must also finance the wider co-operative work in which the churches are jointly engaged. Thus every church faces two somewhat distinct obligations, to bear the expense of its own work and to carry a fair share of the burden imposed by the joint

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\**Concerning the Collection*, by M. E. Dodd. (Now out of print.)



effort of the churches to serve Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Since deacons have as their distinct assignment the gathering and handling of church funds it behooves them to think clearly as regards this duplex business of the churches. There is little danger that the local business will be overlooked. What shall we say concerning the denominational business? We should bear in mind that the co-operative work of the churches is supported by the churches alone. Our denominational boards have no support save such as comes from the churches. Our missionaries must in the end depend for their salaries upon the churches. The boards can meet their obligations fully and promptly only as the churches give them generous and regular support.

Which of these obligations is more binding? Are not churches quite as much obligated to support the general program of the churches as they are bound to meet their own local expense? It may be said that the obligations of each church are contractual and must be paid. Is it not quite as true that the obligations which fall upon the churches jointly are also contractual and must be paid? Are not faithful missionaries to receive their stipend as regularly as pastors? What of the deacons who see to it that their pastor and other church servants receive their checks weekly, semimonthly, or monthly and yet are content to have money for the missionaries go forward quarterly or whenever convenience may suggest?

There is no need to raise the question as to which of these sets of obligations is the more binding. Both are binding. The churches are able to meet both. In both cases the obligations are contractual and must be met.



Deacons who think rightly will recognize that it is a narrow and unworthy policy for the churches to put first their own local work and give a secondary place to the work conducted jointly by the churches. Here, as elsewhere, "There is that [which] scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that [which] withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

Thus the churches gather and handle two distinct funds, one fund for themselves and one fund for the co-operative work of the churches. It must go without saying that in no case must these funds be confused one with another. There must be no "borrowing" from one of these funds to meet the demand upon the other fund. Churches, like other self-respecting institutions, should meet their obligations promptly. If funds are not in hand for this purpose, churches properly may borrow from the banks, as other institutions are accustomed to do. It is not right for churches to take money from missionary funds to meet their own local obligations. In such case the denominational boards must borrow and pay interest on the money used. When a treasurer was asked by the deacons in a certain church to transfer a sum from the denominational funds in hand for use in meeting local expenses, he stoutly protested. When the deacons insisted, he declared that such action probably would be wrong. "If you insist upon my making this transfer of sacred designated funds, I must ask you to accept my resignation as treasurer."

Surely the treasurer was clear in his thinking and correct in his position. The two funds handled by the churches should be kept separate. Full information should be given to the church community each month concerning these funds.



## **CHAPTER VIII**

# **HONORED IN STEWARDSHIP AND CHURCH FINANCE**

## **OUTLINE**

### **I. HONORED IN STEWARDSHIP**

#### **1. A Threefold Principle**

- (1) Stewardship
- (2) Partnership
- (3) Friendship

#### **2. A Threefold Basis**

- (1) Creation
- (2) Providence
- (3) Redemption

#### **3. A Threefold Deduction**

- (1) We should give to our Lord's cause a portion of that which he entrusts to us
- (2) This portion which the Christian gives to his Lord should be a proportion
- (3) This proportion of the believer's increase should be at least one-tenth of his income

### **II. HONORED IN CHURCH FINANCE**

#### **1. A Carefully Prepared Budget**

#### **2. An Inclusive or Unified Budget**

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#### **4. A Skilful Presentation of the Budget**

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## CHAPTER VIII

# HONORED IN STEWARDSHIP AND CHURCH FINANCE

### I. HONORED IN STEWARDSHIP

Our good word "steward" is capable of a wide range of meaning. It may be extended to cover life, time, influence, all that we are and all that we have. In this chapter we frankly limit its range to property, money, material possessions. We are concerned now about the deacon and his money, as his money relates to Christ's service. Since the deacon's office grew out of questions affecting property, and especially since the deacon must deal largely with money matters in the church, this question of the deacon as a steward is of the utmost importance. How can a man lead others to exercise a worthy stewardship if he does not himself give worthily and sacrificially as a good steward? It is safe to say that in the day when our deacons become faithful stewards and support Christ's work in sacrificial fashion the millennium will be brought nearer and our Lord's return will be hastened.

It may be profitable in this chapter to treat somewhat broadly the question of stewardship obligations. We offer, therefore, a threefold principle, a threefold basis, and a threefold deduction.

#### 1. *A Threefold Principle*

The relationship of the believer is set forth in progressive fashion as stewardship, partnership, and friendship.

(1) *Stewardship*.—Jesus sets it out in the form of a story. It goes thus:

For it is like a man going into another country, who summoned his slaves, and committed his property to their care. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one—to each according to his individual ability—and then set out on his travels.

After a long time the master of those slaves came, and demanded a reckoning with them (Matt. 25: 14-15, 19 Montgomery).

The story is so simple that he who runs may read. The case of Jesus is like that of a man going into another country. He called his servants or slaves and committed his property to their care. The man retained his ownership in the property, and his servants merely held it in trust until he should call for an accounting. After a long time the man returned and demanded of his servants a reckoning. The meaning of Jesus is as clear as day. All property which his followers hold is an entrustment. He owns it all. His people are stewards. Being themselves servants or slaves, they cannot own. They are themselves owned. As stewards they hold in trust all that they have. They must use it in accordance with the will of the owner. They are permitted a living and they are to determine the scale on which they are to live. They are to acknowledge their Lord's ownership and their own stewardship by making offerings of that which their Master entrusts to them.

(2) *Partnership*.—In a companion book, *Our Lord and Ours*, the author discusses these questions more fully. In that book he tells of Mr. Grant and his partners.

Mr. Grant is a prosperous dairyman. His contented herds and his well-kept farm attest his energy and indicate his thrift. Mr. Grant runs the business in his own name, J. M. Grant. He has no partner. The profits are, therefore, all his own. He has just closed his books and cast his annual balance. He has had a good year. He has made \$3,000 during the past year. Whose money is this? Ask Mr. Grant and he will quickly tell you whose money it is. It stands to Mr. Grant's credit in the village bank; it belongs to Mr. Grant.

We have said that Mr. Grant has no partner. Is this true? Did Mr. Grant alone produce that \$3,000? Has he really no partner? We spoke too fast. Mr. Grant has two partners. In reality his business title should be J. M. Grant & Company. As we shall soon see, his partners made indispensable contribution and were most important factors in the year's prosperity.

There is certainly one partner which Mr. Grant should not forget. How shall we describe this partner? Sometimes we call this partner *the public*. The community in which Mr. Grant lives, together with the larger realm of which that community is a part—let us call it, for want of a better designation—*society*. Now Mr. Grant has had society for his partner. And what has society furnished in his business? Really it would be simpler to tell what society has not furnished. Society has offered Mr. Grant a market from which to buy and a market in which to sell. What could Mr. Grant have done without these markets which society has offered? Society has protected Mr. Grant in life and property. Without this protection offered by the public neither his life nor his property would have been safe for an

hour. Society provides the hard-surfaced roads over which Mr. Grant takes his produce to the markets. Society provides educational and religious privileges for Mr. Grant and his family. Society brings water into his home and barns. Society brings light to his household. In a word, what is there that Mr. Grant and his family enjoy which is not directly or indirectly provided by society?

Mr. Grant's farm? It is worth \$15,000. Who makes it worth \$15,000? Suppose that farm were in the heart of an arid desert. Suppose it were in the center of an uninhabitable island. It would not be worth one dollar. It is society that makes Mr. Grant's farm worth \$15,000. It is society, Mr. Grant's partner, that enabled him to make \$3,000 during the past year. Alone on a desert island, Mr. Grant could not make a dollar in a hundred years. Apart from society there is no money and can be none. Society has been Mr. Grant's partner; society must continue to be his partner.

Has not Mr. Grant another partner? Let us hope that Mr. Grant gladly and gratefully recognizes the fact. Whether he does or not, Mr. Grant has a silent Partner. It is God. It is his Lord. We spoke of Mr. Grant's farm. Is that farm really his? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Jehovah is still saying, "The land is mine." God, who is a partner with Mr. Grant, has furnished the farm. Is that all that God has furnished? Has not God given Mr. Grant every breath he has drawn? Suppose that God for any single moment had withdrawn his sustaining power. God has given the fertility of the soil, the sunshine, and the rains. God has blessed the cattle and the sheep and has caused them



to multiply. As with society, so with God, it would not be easy to list the things which God has furnished in this partnership.

It is Mr. Grant plus society plus God. It is J. M. Grant and Company. Mr. Grant's business represents a triple partnership. So does every man's business represent a triple partnership.

Whose is this profit of \$3,000 which is in the village bank to the credit of J. M. Grant? Certainly a part of that profit belongs to Mr. Grant. He has put in the labor of his body and of his brain. He is to have his share. It is in his hands; he can be trusted to care for his own interests. A part of that \$3,000 belongs to society. The tax collector will come around and collect from Mr. Grant something of what is due society. But Mr. Grant is not to get off so lightly. Every time he makes a purchase he will pay society a profit, and thus he will recognize the partnership of society. He pays \$100 for a wagon; the raw material cost \$10; he pays \$90 to society for what it has done. He pays \$40 for a suit of clothes; the raw material is worth \$5; he pays society \$35. Mr. Grant purchases a radio; the raw material is worth \$10; he pays society \$90. In every purchase which Mr. Grant and his family make, from chewing gum to automobile, Mr. Grant pays a substantial part to his partner, society. This partner does not wait for Mr. Grant to declare dividends; it constantly and faithfully makes collection of its share of the profits of the farm.

What of Mr. Grant's other partner, his silent Partner? His Lord stands back and waits. He trusts Mr. Grant. He leaves the question of his share to Mr.

Grant's heart and conscience. He is the supreme factor in the prosperity of the business. He owns the farm. He went to Calvary and shed his blood to save Mr. Grant from eternal death. He has rights, but he will not press them. He leaves it with Mr. Grant; "every man according as he purposeth in his heart."

(3) *Friendship*.—Toward the close of his life Jesus brushed aside the thought of stewardship and of partnership; he dismissed the various statements of claim which he had made upon his followers and boldly declared, "Ye are my friends." He put his relationship with his own upon the highest basis. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

Thus he would lift us above law; he would even draw us away from the thought of his ownership and our stewardship; he would soar above the idea of partnership and his consequent claims. He will count us his friends. He withheld nothing, but freely gave all. He will have us meet him on a basis of friendship. He will have us make him gifts because we are his friends. Ours are to be love gifts. We are to bring him our offerings because the love of Christ constrains us.

Thus in an ascending scale Jesus tells us that we are stewards, partners, friends.

## 2. A Threefold Basis

These claims of Jesus have a solid basis. Jesus would not seek anything at our hands on any false pretense. The claims which he presses are well-based. This base is threefold.

(1) *Creation*.—God the Father created us, called us into being. God the Son shared with God the Father this creative act. John declares it:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was face to face with God, and the Word was God. He was face to face with God in the beginning. All things came into being through him, and apart from him nothing that exists came into being (John 1:1-3 Montgomery).

God the Son called us into being, created us. It is on this fact that he bases his claims. This is the ultimate basis on which his claim of ownership rests. This is the basis on which he rests his claim upon us and upon our property.

(2) *Providence*.—God the Son upholdeth "all things by the word of his power." He sustains and maintains the universe. He keeps the planets in their courses. He gives the seasons with their fruitfulness. He puts his hand over and beneath his people to sustain them and give them life. Every breath we breathe is his direct gift, the expression of his mercy. Thus his providence is a further basis of his claim upon us. He has a well-established right to ours because to him we owe life and health and all blessings. Let the man who does not believe in his merciful protection and his loving provision reject and despise his claims upon his substance. But let the believer cry, "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16).

(3) *Redemption*.—"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever trusts in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3: 16 Montgomery).

"But to all who receive him, to them he has given the right to become children of God, even to those who trust in his name" (John 1:12 Montgomery).

"He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, in order that we might become dead to sins, and be alive unto righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24 Montgomery).

Christ's claim upon us and upon ours is based on the fact of his redemption. We are his by right of purchase. "Know ye not that . . . ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price."

Such, then, is the basis on which all of Christ's claims rest. These claims could be defended in any court of justice of which the world knows. No attorney could doubt as to the outcome of a trial in which these claims were to be tested. No judge, no jury, would hesitate to uphold them. Alas for us, the case is going to trial daily and we ourselves as believers are the judge and the jury. What of our verdict? Long before our Lord's day Isaiah similarly summed up and declared the basis of God's claims upon his people (Isa. 43: 1):

a. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee": Creation.

b. "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee": Redemption.

c. "I have called thee by thy name": Providence.

### 3. *A Threefold Deduction*

If our Lord is owner and we are stewards; if partnership with Jesus is a reality, then there follow certain inevitable conclusions.

(1) *We should give to our Lord's cause a portion of that which he entrusts to us.*—Surely there can be no con-

troversy here. Let him who denies and rejects the Lord Jesus rise up and say, "I will give him nothing because I owe him nothing." The devout believer will drown out his voice as he cries, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" Every impulse of love, every suggestion of gratitude, every prompting of the Spirit, binds the believer to give to his Lord a portion of his increase.

(2) *This portion which the Christian gives to his Lord should be a proportion.*—It should be a definite, agreed part. We should not be content with the giving of tips to God. We should not undertake to carry on our Lord's worldwide enterprises on the basis of gifts prompted by impulse. This is not worthy of us; it is not worthy of the vast projects which the Lord has committed to us. We do not meet any other obligation thus. Not thus do we discharge our debts to our fellows; nor do we meet in this way our obligation to support the state or the general government.

Surely we can meet no protest here. The Lord's people should be systematic in their giving. The portion by which they acknowledge their stewardship and declare their friendship should be a definite proportion of their increase.

(3) *This proportion of the believer's increase should be at least one-tenth of his income.*—The consciences of millions of Christians have so declared. Such precedent as we may draw from the Old Testament Scriptures so declares. The fact that no great religion in all the ages ever asked less of its devotees so affirms.

We introduce two men at this point and let them as personal witnesses tell us why they tithe.

## WHY I BELIEVE IN TITHING

*John L. Hill*

(1) I believe in tithing because I love Jesus, appreciate in some measure what he has done for me, and realize that I could not make adequate return even if I should put all my income into his treasury.

(2) I believe in tithing because I like to have a definite minimum expression of my love for my Master. Such minimum expression relieves me of anxiety and concern which might otherwise be inevitable.

(3) I believe in tithing because the practice of it challenges love gifts above the tithe and brings some of the satisfaction of joyous service.

(4) I believe in tithing because the tithe affords a convenient, sensible, practical basis of co-operation in kingdom work.

(5) Loving the Master and delighting to work with my brethren for his glory, I am happy to covenant with them to put regularly into the treasury of the church one-tenth of my gross income.

## WHY I ADVOCATE TITHING

*T. Clagett Skinner*

I advocate tithing because:

(1) The Scriptures suggest this percentage. The people of the Lord practiced it under his direction through long centuries of Bible history.

(2) I have found it practical in my own life. Along with the multitudes of believers I can testify to the blessings which it brings.



(3) Whenever a large percentage of the members of a church follow this method **THAT CHURCH HAS NO DIFFICULTY IN FINANCING ITS PART** of the kingdom.

(4) It is something definite and tangible. It is a tested scriptural standard. It does not leave the matter to pious twaddle or superciliousness.

(5) I have never found any other method so workable. This method becomes increasingly easy. All other methods become increasingly difficult.

The following conversation, which took place between a husband and wife while an every-member canvass was being conducted in a certain church, suggests very forcibly that stewardship teaching is still needed among our people. Dr. Curtis Lee Laws, former editor of *The Watchman-Examiner*, vouched for the incident:

Husband: "Who is that in the front room?"

Wife: "It is a worker in the every-member canvass team in our church."

He: "What does he want?"

She: "He wants to know whether we will renew our pledge of \$25 for another year."

He: "I would like to know what those church people think. There I have just bought a new car for \$2,500, and paid my downtown club dues of \$200, and here I have a bill of \$150 that I owe to my golf club, and that little trip down to Miami cost us nearly \$500, and I have a cigar bill that has just come for \$67.50. Say, suppose we are members of the church, and suppose our children do go there to Sunday school, do those people think that we are made of money?"



## II. HONORED IN CHURCH FINANCE

Church finance has come to be a science. Deacons should be masters of the science. At least they should be careful students of the science. The pastor has his responsibility here, but this is peculiarly the sphere of the deacons and they should bear their own responsibility. We present here a brief discussion outlining some salient features of a well-ordered system of church finance.

### 1. *A Carefully Prepared Budget*

An advance estimate should be made to ascertain what goal the church should undertake to reach for a given year. Such estimate is called a budget. It is a schedule, a working agreement. The word "budget" originally means *bag* or *sack*, the thought being that many items of expense are to be brought together into one receptacle. The budget thus brings together into a system the obligations of the church. It offers system in the place of haphazard and chance. It provides a definite goal. The tendency on the part of the churches to provide a budget as a basis for gathering and disbursing money is growing rapidly and promises to be a distinct and meaningful development in church finance.

The deacon should study carefully and thoroughly the whole question of the budget in church finance. It is not a subject to be mastered "before breakfast," nor is it one for Saturday afternoon recreation. It involves a profound and far-reaching science and is worthy of faithful and prolonged investigation. The deacon will wish to read much of what is written on the subject.

## *2. An Inclusive or Unified Budget*

Church finance plans should be unified so that the church as an institution may conduct a single orderly system. In many instances churches are gathering and disbursing money. Their Sunday schools and even their organized classes are likewise collecting and dispensing funds. At the same time yet other organizations may be conducting independent efforts in finance. Various and sometimes conflicting appeals are made and confusion often results.

Why should not the church systematize its finances, arranging one budget and one central treasury into which all individuals and all organizations shall bring their contributions? Out of this central treasury the church should defray all expenses. Thus, instead of haphazard and disorder there might be orderliness and system.

In order to make clearer this need for a church system let us state a situation which may be duplicated in all parts of the land. The church has its own usual budget and conducts its regular campaign for money. At the same time the Sunday school asks its members for contributions and conducts an independent financial effort. Meantime the large organized classes conduct yet other and separate campaigns. Such classes are especially open to random appeals, all of which may be worthy. At the same time the Brotherhood and the W.M.U. and other organizations are asking for contributions. One generous member counted six distinct appeals for money which came to him on one Sunday. This man finds it necessary to reduce his regular church pledge in order to meet various other demands which

come throughout the year. Inasmuch as he cannot forecast the number or urgency of such demands, he finds that any real system in his giving is rendered difficult, if not impracticable.

It should be said in passing that in proposing the inclusive or unified budget we are not concerned with the question of the single or the double budget. Churches will, of course, use their own discretion as to whether the inclusive budget shall combine local expense and benevolences into one fund or whether these funds shall be gathered and disbursed separately.

### *3. Definite Plans Regarding Special Offerings*

The object of the budget is to secure system and orderliness. The budget should include all causes and all calls to which the church is to give attention during the year. Such special offerings as are to be asked should be definitely arranged and announced at the beginning of the year. Of course, it will be understood that in case of any unforeseen emergency, such as fire, flood, storm, and similar providences, special offerings not previously announced will be asked.

Practically all of the special calls which arise might be anticipated at the beginning of the year. Perhaps any which are not thus anticipated might wait over until a new schedule or budget is made up for another year.

A church is entitled to make its own annual program and schedule for offerings. Outside organizations should not expect to knock at the door of the church and demand offerings at their own convenience and without regard to the church program. Rather, the church should

invite and receive all such calls in accordance with its own prearranged schedule.

#### 4. *A Skilful Presentation of the Budget*

When the budget is carefully made, when all causes which can be anticipated are duly included, when proper provision is made for all departments to meet all obligations, the next step is to present the whole plan to the church with such fulness and such persuasive explanation as will insure hearty approval. The people will not give cheerfully and generously unless they are informed and convinced. A thorough canvass, of course, should be made in an effort to enlist as nearly as possible every member of the church.

#### 5. *A Proper Operation of the Budget*

It is at this point that failure and consequent disappointment are often experienced. If through the budget a guiding schedule is provided for the year, and then the guide is forthwith disregarded, all the planning comes to naught. If in the budget certain allowances are made only to be forgotten as the year passes, the system will be quickly destroyed.

In the proper operation of the budget churches are necessarily largely dependent on their treasurers. It is necessary for the treasurer so to keep the records as to show at regular intervals the expenditures as compared with the budget allowances, and thus preserve and protect the general plan.

#### 6. *A Worthy System of Records*

The Sunday School Board has devised and recommends *The Improved Church Treasurer's Record*. This

system is carefully developed and is offered along two lines: (1) It is arranged for use with the double budget and the duplex envelope. (2) It is also arranged for use with a single budget and a single envelope.

(1) *A single-double budget system.*—*The Improved Church Treasurer's Record* system last mentioned really offers a single budget in the gathering of funds and, when funds are received, it proposes a proper subdivision between local expense and the Cooperative Program, thus offering from this point a double budget.

Churches which offer the single budget with the one-pocket envelope should divide the funds, as they are received each week, on an agreed basis between the local budget and the denominational objects.

However church funds are gathered, whether through the single or the double budget, they should be divided fairly between the local budget and the Cooperative Program, and each of these funds should be sacredly guarded.

Churches do a duplex financial business. They gather two distinct funds. They gather money for their own use and they gather money for the joint program of the churches.

In conducting this duplex business the churches have not the right to make the fund for their own uses basal and the other fund secondary. They have not the right to make one fund a rider for the other, thus guaranteeing their own needs.

Churches have not the right to "borrow" the missionary and benevolent funds for their own uses.

Once separated these two funds are to be kept continuously sacred and separate. Under no circumstances

is money to be "borrowed" or in any way diverted from the fund set apart for benevolences and missions. *What God hath separated let not man join together.* There is here a point of honor, a question of simple integrity.

The obligations of the churches are not more binding or "contractual" than are the obligations of the denominational boards. If churches take money given for missions and use it for themselves, they are taking the stipend due the missionary and giving it to the pastor or the janitor. Will a self-respecting pastor be pleased to have his own salary at the expense of a sacrificing missionary? Would not even a janitor hesitate to accept his compensation if the money has to be taken from orphan children or old and needy preachers?

(2) *Suggestions for keeping these funds intact.*—When the funds are properly divided the denominational portion may be passed to a special mission treasurer to be remitted and accounted for by him.

The denominational funds may be carried as a separate deposit in the bank.

The funds for denominational objects may be forwarded promptly each week, thus serving the interests of the boards and avoiding any temptation to divert or "borrow" mission funds.

It is believed that this carefully prepared record system will aid materially the deacons in conducting the financial affairs of the church and in keeping both themselves and the church fully informed as to the finances.







## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND EXAMINATION

See Directions for the Teaching and the Study of This Book for Credit, page 5.

### CHAPTER I

1. Trace briefly the successive unfolding steps in the story of the origin of the office of deacon.
2. Show that the unfolding story reflects credit:
  - (1) Upon the apostles
  - (2) Upon the minority
  - (3) Upon the majority

### CHAPTER II

3. Indicate the nature of the office of deacon as seen:
  - (1) In the word used to designate it
  - (2) In its relation to the pastor
  - (3) In its relation to the church
4. What are some ways in which the deaconship may be dishonored?

### CHAPTER III

5. What are some spiritual requirements of the office of deacon?
6. What are some moral qualifications suggested in the New Testament for the deacon?
7. Say something as to the suggestion that deacons should be sound in doctrine.
8. What of deacons and their family relationship?
9. Discuss the question of "deaconesses."

### CHAPTER IV

10. What number of deacons should churches have?
11. Indicate the preparation needed for the election of deacons.

12. How should deacons be elected?
13. What should be the deacon's tenure of office?
14. Indicate some ways in which men may cease to be deacons in a given church.
15. How should men be set apart for the work of the deaconship?

#### CHAPTER V

16. Indicate some ways in which deacons may "serve with the pastor."
17. What are some ways in which deacons may "serve the church"?

#### CHAPTER VI

18. Indicate a threefold ideal for deacons.
19. Offer some suggestions showing how deacons may attain the threefold ideal.
20. Outline present church organization.
21. What is the distinctive assignment of the deacons in this organization?
22. What of a cabinet or council for this organization?

#### CHAPTER VII

23. Tell of the deacon's obligation to win souls.
24. Indicate the deacon's special opportunity to win souls.
25. What of the deacon's equipment for soul-winning?
26. What are some special reasons why deacons should "know missions"?
27. Why should the deacon pray for missions?
28. Indicate some reasons why the deacon should make the church the channel of his gifts.
29. Say something as to the deacon's protecting missions.

## CHAPTER VIII

30. State briefly the threefold principle which underlies stewardship obligations.
31. Indicate a threefold basis for stewardship obligations.
32. What threefold deduction may be drawn as regards stewardship obligations?
33. Give some reasons for tithing.
34. What is meant by a church budget?
35. Why should the budget be inclusive?
36. What of plans for special offerings?
37. Say something as to the operation of the budget.
38. What is your own reaction as regards the proposed single-double budget?





{ 9 - mothers day ✓  
16 - grad. - (base Sunday) ✓  
23 -  
31 - memorial Day ✓

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